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*Top to bottom: Timalerua, the canoe maker; Tiwi spears; mourning ceremony around gravepósts.*

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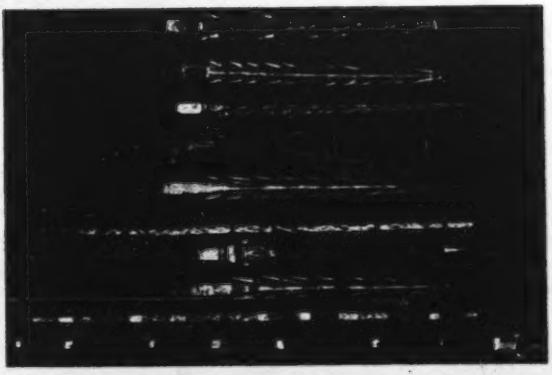

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1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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in the party who carried only ordinary ones. The painted spears were symbols of wealth and status and roughly corresponded to white tie and tails in our culture. No important man could afford not to have them, even though for most of the year they were unused. Before leaving home on a journey, it was often necessary for a man to renew the paint on his spears, for it rubbed off easily. Since paint was an aspect of ritual, its use, even the renewal of old paint, was senior men's prerogative; women were not supposed to touch it.[8] The analogy with formal dress even extended to the borrowing of ceremonial spears. An important man, caught short of them, might borrow some from a contemporary who had plenty, and though everybody would know that his spears were borrowed, he at least was properly dressed for the occasion, though stark naked otherwise.

Baskets made of bark with gummed sides were made by the women, but the painted designs upon these baskets were applied by the men, in line with their monopoly on all work that required paint. These baskets of various sizes but little variation in shape were used for all domestic tasks involving the collection, storing, transporting, and preparing of vegetable foods, and were sufficiently watertight to enable water also to be carried in them. Ordinary wooden spears (without barbs or painted designs) and a great variety of throwing sticks were made by all men, young or old, but important old men bothered with them very little, considering such routine manufacture beneath them. These workaday spears and throwing sticks lay around every camp in abundance, and a man who needed spears or sticks in a hurry could always gather up a bundle in a few minutes. Small boys picked up the techniques of making spears and throwing sticks by spending time with older boys who in turn improved their skill both in making and using hunting weapons by spending time with the local young men.

Although much of this learning was fairly random, other instruction was not. During his initiation period a youth spent long intervals isolated in the bush with a couple of older teachers from whom he received training in religious and ritual matters. At the same time, of course, it was inevitable that the novice absorb some of the older men's experience in bushcraft. There was no corresponding initiation period for girls. What they learned, they learned first from the older women of their childhood household and later from the older women of the husband's household into which they moved as child-brides after puberty. In all households the supervision by the elderly women of all younger women included the training of both female children and young wives in the things all females should know—things which were mostly concerned with collecting and preparing vegetable foods and the making of baskets.

In pre-white times Tiwi males wore no clothing whatever. The Mission insisted on calico loincloths, but, at least in the 1928-29 period, one could

[8] Female mourners were required to daub their bodies with white clay as a sign of mourning, but this paint was smeared haphazardly over their bodies and faces without any attempt at regularity or design, in contrast to the careful paint designs on the men's bodies.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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sister's son being initiated, the attitude of a Tiwi toward the whole *pukimani* state was essentially a passive attitude. *Pukimani* behavior was something one accepted and conformed to when required; it was in no way an active attempt to change nature, people, food, gods, spirits, or anything else in the universe. It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that since their *pukimani* system offered them no handle by which to seek actively to alter the universe in which they lived, the Tiwi found that universe to their liking as it was. Unlike the tribes of central Australia who lavished a lot of thought upon magical methods of improving the food supply or the rainfall, the Tiwi believed and acted on the belief that as long as they observed their *pukimani* taboos, the food would continue to be as abundant and the rains as regular as they had always been. The central Australians, by seeking to coerce nature through magic, suggest that they found nature unsatisfactory; the Tiwi, by relying upon passive taboo-observance alone, suggest rather that their relationship to nature was an acceptable equilibrium that they wanted to preserve, not change. And if everybody observed his *pukimani* taboos when required, that equilibrium would remain undisturbed. Hence the antisocial man in Tiwi was not the maker of individual magic (he was unknown, anyway) but the nonobserver of taboo. By his nonobservance he threatened to upset the normally satisfactory equilibrium between man and nature. For a senior Tiwi male to be charged publicly with breaking *pukimani* rules was a disgrace and a blow to his prestige and his position in public opinion. His behavior was possibly a sin against the spirits but it was certainly a shame in the eyes of his fellows. *Pukimani* observance was thus a matter of respectability to a much greater degree than it was a matter of pleasing the spirits.

DEATH As was mentioned above, death is the natural phenomenon around which the Tiwi had woven their most elaborate web of ritual. The most frequent and most important Tiwi ceremonies were the mourning ceremonies, and they came in three sizes—small, medium, and large—depending on the age, sex, and importance of the dead person. The mourning ceremonies which drew the crowds were not held until some time after the death and burial. All bodies of dead persons were buried within twenty-four hours of their death by digging a hole near the camp where the death had occurred and placing the body, wrapped in bark, in it. Near most well-used camping spots there was already a graveyard marked by old graveposts, and the latest corpse was buried there or near there. Seldom was the body carried any distance for burial. If a person died even less than a mile from an old burial ground, there was little inclination to carry the body that far. He would be buried, instead, within perhaps a hundred yards of where he died. This had certain awkward repercussions for social organization, since occasionally a person died while away from his home district and, being buried where he died, his ceremonies were held and his posts erected in a district in which his immediate family did not live. Young men often used this to validate a change of residence, giving as their reason for living in a band territory in which they had not grown up, the location there of their father's graveposts.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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To avoid constant use of the awkward phrase "mourning ceremony," we refer to it as the funeral though it took place some considerable time after the burial of the body. How long a time elapsed between the burial and the funeral depended upon the importance of the dead person. The more important the deceased, the longer it took after his or her burial to prepare for the funeral, both ceremonially and practically. Babies frequently had no funeral ceremonies at all, especially if they died very young and unnamed. Children were given small funerals, held within a month or so after the death, and the people present were merely the members of the local households. Young adult men and all adult women had funerals of medium size, and old men had the biggest funerals of all. Big funerals were rarely held in the wet season because of the height of the grass and bush and the consequent difficulty of travel. The season after the end of the rains (April-May-June) was a favorite time for funerals since by then people were moving again and there was then an accumulated backlog of funerals to be held for people who had died late in the previous dry season or during the wet. The mourning ceremonies of two or more people were sometimes held together; this obviously required that they be buried close together, although they need not have died at the same time. Seeking as usual to increase his importance in the public eye, a man might hold the medium-sized funeral of one of his children at the same time and place as the big funeral of an important elder—provided their graves were close together—even though two or three months had separated the two deaths.

The actual burial of the body immediately after death was usually a small affair attended only by whatever people happened to be in the vicinity. But some Tiwi ancients were on their last legs for months before they finally expired, and it was typical of Tiwi psychology that people should maneuver to be present when a death occurred. Until the anthropologist understood that even death had its political aspects, he could not understand why the Tiwi were always so anxious to hang around the camp of an old man who was taking an awfully long time to die. Since so very little happened at the actual time of death, this desire to be on the spot seemed merely morbid curiosity.[8] But it was not. A death immediately divided the whole tribe into two groups: a small group of relatives who automatically became mourners and therefore in a state of strict taboo, and the rest who were not sufficiently close to the deceased to have to assume a state of *pukimani*. The mourners, being *pukimani*, could do scarcely anything except weep and wail and gash their heads with stone axes. They could not touch the body or wrap it in bark; nor could they dig the grave, nor put the body in, nor fill in the hole. They had to ask non-mourners to carry out these tasks and thus became obligated to those non-

[8] How else was one to interpret the reluctance of Hart's party to move on, after spending three weeks waiting for old Tamboo to die, and the old man still lingered on? "Let's wait another day; maybe he'll die tomorrow" was the invariable response to suggestions that we move. "And if he does die, what will happen?" "Nothing; we'll move on then." But this was early in the fieldwork period, before Hart realized the all-pervasive character of Tiwi opportunism.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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mourners for their services. Death, in other words, incapacitated the relatives, so the nonrelatives swarmed in to "help" them—that is, take advantage of their incapacity. A man who could say, "I helped to dig your mother's grave" had a hold for the rest of his life over the man or men to whom he could say it. Such a hold was not as strong, of course, as that of a man who could say, "I helped you get your first bestowed wife," but the difference of obligation was only a difference of degree. The Tiwi were always "helping" each other, but the man who was "helped" therefore "owed" something to his helper. At deaths, mourners mourned and nonmourners did the work; therefore the mourners "owed" the nonmourners, and such debts were carried on the same mental ledgers as other debts, such as marriage debts.

When deaths occurred suddenly and unexpectedly, the mourners had to choose their helpers for the burial from the relatively few people present at the time, and were thus often forced to become obligated to men they did not much relish being under obligation to. At the funerals the same bookkeeping mentality prevailed, but since these were not held until months after the death and burial, the chief mourners had time to select their helpers with care and political finesse. Satellites were very useful in this connection, since a man could ask his satellites to perform the necessary ceremonial services and thus get a return from them for the debts of gratitude they already owed him. This was one reason why a skillful Tiwi politician did not by any means select only close kinsmen for satelliteship. A death which made him *pukimani* was likely to make his close kinsmen *pukimani* also, hence he needed some satellites who were not close kinsmen.

In the interval between the burial and the funeral, the chief mourner, on behalf of all the mourners but fairly independently if he were a big man, allocated all the jobs that had to be done in preparation for the funeral. Everybody who came had to be fed by the mourners, and the collection and hoarding of the necessary food devolved on the women of the mourning households. Thus the mourners provided the food, but everything else necessary had to be prepared by nonmourners. The chief item among the ceremonial necessities was the graveposts. The prohibition on mourners approaching the body and the grave extended to the posts, and therefore the cutting, carving, erecting on the grave, and painting of these central features of the funeral ceremonies had to be carried out by nonmourners, "asked to cut the posts" by the chief mourner. Here there was much room for influence maneuvers. A big man acting as chief mourner for a dead relative wanted the funeral to be as lavish as possible, to show his own importance. But the more important the nonmourners he selected to cut the posts for him, the more he owed them for their services. Such a request was in the nature of asking a favor, and to ask a favor was to put oneself in a subordinate position, in terms of influence. The Tiwi power orientation was so ingrained that, even when acting as chief mourner, an elder could not avoid making his requests and allocating the ceremonial tasks so as to gain ground if possible, or at least not lose any ground, in the influence and prestige race.

The mourning ceremonies, though prolonged for several days of con-

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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stant dancing and singing, were rather dull and monotonous, considered as ceremonial. The gaily colored posts erected right on the grave served as a sort of central altar. Every senior male sang and danced in turn " his own dance" and the rest of the men standing in a large circle acted as a major chorus. A large gap was left in the circle of men and into this gap and out again danced the women in a disorderly clump, as a sort of minor chorus. Most of the day was taken up with endless repetitions of these individually owned and individually performed dances which had no relation whatever to death or the deceased, but which each "owner" used on every ceremonial occasion. In addition, there were a few ritual performances that were special to the fact of death, including the grand finale of every mourning ceremony, when everybody present, led by the mourners, collectively charged the posts and then roared past them into the surrounding bush. This was done to drive the spirits away from the grave finally and forever and thus end the mourners' state of *pukimani*.

We have no space for further details of ceremonial, but enough has been said to indicate that mourning ceremonies, the biggest collective occasions of the Tiwi dry season, were as much political affairs as they were religious occasions. The connecting link was the state of *pukimani* in which death put the relatives. Men in a state of *pukimani* were at a disadvantage in social and political life while that state lasted. They had to ask other people to do things for them. They had to "pay" for these favors. At the same time they could not afford to be niggardly in running their relative's funeral. If they were, they would never live it down. In such an atmosphere we have to conclude that the spiritual welfare of the deceased was relegated to a minor place and that for the mourners the real climax of the days of frenzied grief around the posts came when the spirits were driven away from the grave into the bush and thus their own *pukimani* state, which had been such a political handicap to them for many months, came to an end.

INITIATION Space permits only the barest mention of initiation, which was, along with mourning, the chief vehicle of Tiwi ritual. For females there were no initiation ceremonies, but for males it was a long drawn-out and elaborate affair, marked by successive stages or grades which began with the status of *Mawkumarni*, which a boy entered when he was about fourteen, and did not end finally until he was around twenty-four. Here again we meet the ideology of debt and obligation. The group of men, necessarily older than himself, who initiated a youth thereby put him under obligation to them for the rest of his life. They "did something for him" and years later would bring it up if his subsequent behavior seemed to be directed against their interests. The obligations contracted in initiation, like obligations contracted at burials or mourning ceremonies, were woven into the kinship and influence systems; indeed the relation of a youth to the men who initiated him was often the beginning of a satellite-patron relationship that lasted half his life.

The initiation of a boy had to be undertaken by a group of men who were already fully initiated themselves and who stood to him in the relation of male cross-cousins. Preferably such men were either married to or likely

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
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riage with a boy who was willing to become the "worker" of the girl's controller.[8]

From the economic standpoint, the large household has much the same function as before the days of the Mission. The younger women go out together and gather food; the old women stay home with the young children. The younger men bring home choice items, which now are trade goods and money from Darwin. The "boss" of the great household is wealthy; today, he has food, tobacco, clothes, and usually sufficient money to gamble. The composition of the great households has altered, but their function is very much the same. The establishment of the monogamous Catholic Cabbagee is even larger than that of the polygamous old pagan, Ki-in-kumi, described in an earlier chapter; Cabbagee, with only one wife, has more women under his "control" than ever Ki-in-kumi had, despite his list of twenty-one wives. The Tiwi have thus been able to retain their large households even under the Mission-imposed system of monogamy.

## The Change from Patriliny to Matriliny

In the pre-Cooper era of feuding, the largest significant units among the Tiwi were the bands; the Tiwi never, in that by-gone day, acted as a tribe, even in their attacks upon such outsiders as the British. In the 1950's, when informants talked of the old days they commonly mentioned that male members of old bands came together as units to go on war parties. These old bands did not have a strict rule of descent. But, as has already been indicated, the majority of the males were regarded all their lives as members of the band to which their father belonged. That is, the major unit of the old Tiwi social structure was patrilineal in emphasis.

There also existed in the old Tiwi pattern a strictly matrilineal clan organization, related primarily to totemism. One of the totemic animals of a clan stood for a member of that clan in the song composed to commemorate his death; for instance, the first line of the mourning song for a deceased male of the Red Paint Clan might be "I am red paint." Occasionally, several members of a clan helped one of their number in a fight, but this was apparently not very common before the Mission era. This clan-organization pattern prevailed among the Tiwi through about 1930. Then major and most unpredictable changes began.

What does one expect to happen when a society which has a patrilineal emphasis, like the old Tiwi one, comes into contact with a European society where, if there is any emphasis, it is a patrilineal one? Although one would ordinarily expect a strengthening of patriliny, such was not the case among the Tiwi. The old social unit which was predominantly patrilineal was a territorial group with its major functions in the system of feuding. When the

[8] By 1953, the terms "boss" and "worker" had come into the local Tiwi dialect to indicate superordinate and subordinate status interrelationships.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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## CHAPTER III

# The Pukamuni Ceremony

765 182 THE burial ceremonies of the aborigines of Melville and Bathurst Islands, based on the *pukamuni* of the mythical man, *Purukupali*, are, by far, the most important events in their ceremonial life.

These ceremonies, which allow the aborigines full expression for their grief, provide, at the same time, a complete cultural outlet for their philosophical beliefs, their music, their art and their dancing. No one, watching these [781] primitive rituals, night after night, could fail to be impressed by the obvious pleasure experienced by both the participants and the onlookers.

114 765 Spencer (1928, pp. 647–52), is the only investigator to describe and illustrate any details of the *pukamuni* ceremony. Although he saw but one day of the ceremonials, and that of the closing rituals, he records, briefly, many of the procedures which we witnessed in 1954, i.e., the rite of fire-jumping (p. 73), the spearing of the grave (p. 83), and (p. 89), the "spearing" of one of the participants and the erecting of the poles. This evidence shows 177 765 that, in spite of the disturbing effects of civilization and the complete ecclesiastical ban on Bathurst Island, the *pukamuni* ceremony is still a vital force in the lives of the Tiwi people.

123 During the six months the expedition was on Melville Island, Miss Jane Goodale, Mr. W. E. Harney and I witnessed some, or all of the rituals of four *pukamuni* ceremonies; one of a man, *Waniamperi*, who had been buried within half a mile of our camp; another of an old woman, *Makapini*, who, against the wishes of her relatives, had been buried in the mission cemetery on Bathurst Island; still another of a premature infant; and, only a few weeks before I left Melville Island, one of *Nulatini*, the deceased wife of our helper, *Pulanimbuwi*.

123 128 I will describe the burials of *Waniamperi* and *Nulatini*, and the final rituals of *Waniamperi* and *Makapini*. However, as we saw, in all, twenty-seven *ilanias*, the general pattern of which was similar, I will describe but five of them; three belonging to *Waniamperi*, one to *Makapini* and one to *Nulatini*.[44] The short rituals, associated with the dead infant, will be treated as a separate unit.

[44] The final rituals took place after my departure from Melville Island. These will be dealt with by Miss Goodale.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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## I. BELIEFS IN THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

The fear of the spirits of the dead and the desire of the living to propitiate them are the bases for the complicated burial rituals, not only of the Tiwi, but of all Australian tribes.

The Tiwi spirits of the dead, the *mopaditis*, live in self-contained communities at the various totemic places on Melville and Bathurst Islands. The *mopaditis* have the same appearance as the aboriginal folk, except that their bodies no longer have substance, being but nebulous images of their former selves.

No living person has seen these *mopaditis*, for they are invisible by day, white in the moonlight and black in the darkness. Although, normally, the *mopaditis* travel on the surface of the ground in the same manner as the aborigines, they are able, when crossing a river, or an arm of the sea, to walk on the surface of the water.

In the spirit land, the *mopaditis*, who are eternal, retain their totems (*pukwi*), marry spirit women of the correct tribal relationships, and have children who grow to maturity.[47] They eat the same food as the aborigines, going hungry if the hunting is poor,[48] and use the same implements and weapons.[49]

At the death of an aboriginal, the *mopaditi* rises out of the chest of the corpse. If the corpse is that of an infant, or a very small child, its *mopaditi* stays in the immediate neighbourhood, sleeping with the bereaved mother every night, but leaving in the morning before she wakes up. This continues until the woman has recovered from her grief.

After some months, the spirit child, now called a *buda-buda*, re-enters the body of its previous mother through her vulva and starts life again as a human being.

On the other hand, if the person has lived for some time, its *mopaditi* stays around the grave, mourning because it has to leave its old companions. But after three days have elapsed, the *mopaditi* calls out "*Nimbungi*" (good-bye), and sets off, unaccompanied,[50] to the locality where it was born, which, before

[47] The aborigines are not certain whether the children, like their parents, have eternal life.

[48] This is unusual; in most of the aboriginal heavens I have heard of, for example, north-eastern Arnhem Land (Mountford, 1956, p. 323), there is ample, easily-gathered food.

[49] These days, the *mopaditis* have even the modern wooden canoes, although, up to fifty years ago, their canoes, like those of the living people, were made from a folded sheet of bark.

[50] Some aborigines believe that the father, or some close relative, comes to the grave and guides the spirit to its birthplace.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20



while one of the "workers" pouring water over him, washed the white paint from his body (Pl. 23E). 764

This was the signal for another burst of hysterical mourning; the women either beat themselves with sticks or sat in groups, wailing heart-brokenly, while the men, their arms about one another's shoulders, cut one another's heads with knives. The injuries they received, however were superficial, and the cutting and self-flagellations more ceremonial than real. [304] [785]

After the husband danced, the significance of which I was unable to learn, everyone, men, women and children, jumped across the grave. This ritual, originally performed by *Tukimbini* at *Purukupali's pukamuni*, was supposed so to confuse the *mopaditi* of *Nulatini* that, should she leave the grave, she would be unable to find the track to her old camp. The men gave the honey, then the mosquito calls, and the burial ceremony was over. [775]

As the relatives quietly left and returned to camp, the "workers", as in all normal burials, lit a fire for the *mopaditi* to warm herself and to cook her food. They also left water for her to drink. *Pulanimbuwi*, who should have departed with the other mourners, stayed behind and watched these final rituals from the top of a nearby *pukamuni* pole (Pl. 23 D). [775]

### 3. CUSTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH THE GRAVE

#### (1) *The Determination of the Cause of Death*

Until the performance of the final rituals, about three months after the death of *Waniamperi*, the grave (Pl. 24C), covered with layers of paper-bark, was left undisturbed, except that a screen of boughs had been erected, as instructed by *Jibunglialuni* of Bathurst Island (see message stick, Fig. 5F, G, H), so that the people walking along the motor road leading to our camp could not see it. 765

For the first few days after the death of *Waniamperi*, distant relatives of the dead man visited the grave and searched for some track or other indications of the cause of death; for the Tiwi, in common with the mainland aborigines, believe that death is the result of the magic of some person or spirit-being, not the result of natural causes. 761

The morning after the death of *Waniamperi*, someone noticed a wallaby looking at the grave. This, the aborigines assumed, was the man, who, having been responsible for the death,[84] had changed himself into a [825] [754]

[84] This statement requires more explanation than I can give. I do not know personally of any rituals among the Tiwi by which they can magically kill a man, although, no doubt, they exist. Harney and Elkin, 1942, p. 232, refer to a means of attracting the meteor-man, *Papinjuwuri*, to an enemy.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20



761 wallaby, so that he could see the grave of his victim without being
825 recognised.
761 On one occasion, when I was travelling with *Pulanimbuwi*, just after the death of his wife, he went to her grave, carefully searched the ground for tracks, then lifting up the sheets of paper-bark, examined the mound. Later, *Pulanimbuwi* announced that a *Marayji* (p. 154) had killed his wife, *Nulatini*, by getting inside of her body. But, although still there when she was buried, the *Marayji* had escaped through the hole *Pulanimbuwi* had seen in the mound.[57]

(2) *The Seclusion of the Grave*

769 The grave of *Waniamperi* was about a hundred yards from the road between our camp and the Snake Bay aboriginal settlement. Although aborigines, who were only distantly related to the dead man, walked backward and forward along this road, all the *pukamuni* people had to take a roundabout path from which it was not possible to see the grave site.

One night, *Marawani*, one of the chief mourners, had to pass along the road to our camp. When he was approaching the position from which the grave site could be seen in the day-time, his wife, wrapping his head in a blanket, led him past the spot. This practice was only allowed at night; it was prohibited during the day.[58]

775 No aboriginal man hunted the creatures, or woman gathered the plant
784 foods adjacent to the grave, so that, should the *mopaditi* of *Waniamperi* return to his burial place for a while he would find ample food.

4. THE PRELIMINARY CEREMONIES, THE ILANIAS

(1) *The Ilanias of Waniamperi*

●765 About two months after the burial of *Waniamperi*, *Wurarbuti*, the ceremonial leader of the Melville Island people, sent message sticks to Bathurst Island aborigines telling them that the *ilanias* (preliminary rituals) of *Waniamperi* were about to start.

123 We saw eleven of *Waniamperi's ilanias*. But, as they were more or less the same, I will describe only three.

765 [57] *Pulanimbuwi's* action was viewed with considerable disfavour. He, as a near relative, should not have gone near the grave until the final rituals. Only the *wanaras* (workers) who cut the poles are allowed to do that.

183 [58] Under the normal tribal conditions, these precautions would have been unnecessary, because the place of burial would then have been in some distant, unfrequented locality.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20



(a) One of the first series, when the "workers" were appointed, which was held in the main camp. [765]

(b) One of the second series, held at a ceremonial ground mid-way between the first and the place of burial.

(c) An *ilanis* performed by the Bathurst Island group who attended to take part in the final *pukamuni* rituals.

(a) *The First Ilanias*

The first series of *ilanias* was performed on a ceremonial ground, about forty feet in diameter, adjacent to *Wurarbuti's* camp. All stones and tree roots had been dug out so that the dancers would not injure their feet. In the centre of the dancing circle, or *milimika*, a fire was laid ready for the later ritual of *wandiatapinda*, or fire-jumping,[69] a ritual which was carried out at most but not all of the *ilanias* (Pl. 24B). At some of the later *ilanias*, particularly at the second *milimika*, aborigines, close relatives of the dead, performed a similar ritual by climbing a tree at the base of which others lit a fire of grass and dead leaves (Pl. 23C).

Although I suspect that the ritual of jumping over the fire once had a deeper significance, the present day belief is that the fire, by burning the hair on the legs of the aborigines, protects them from stumbling over logs; from their limbs becoming tired on long journeys, or from dead trees falling on them as they travel through the forest. The smoke from the fire also brought them good health. No women took part in the *wandiatapinda* rituals, although the men often held their small children in the smoke. [751] [372]

*Wurarbuti*, the ceremonial leader or *alouwia* (frontispiece) of the *Waiamperi's pukamuni* rituals, was an intelligent, sophisticated aboriginal, who had worked for long periods in Darwin, and, more recently, had visited the southern States to dance before the Queen of England. [765 177]

Because of his knowledge of European ways and the goods of the white man, the songs and dances of this first series of *ilanias* were a curious mixture of the old and the new cultures. Although most, if not all, of the dances performed at the *ilanias* are traditional and totemic, it is permissible to modify them for the song of the moment. [176]

The ceremony opened when the assembled aborigines, about twenty of them, standing within the *milimika*, gave the low-pitched honey call, with the high-pitched mosquito call, which precedes and finishes all *ilanias*.

[69] Spencer (1928, p. 648), saw this rite at Cockle Point, on Apsley Straits (Fig. 1), during 1911. [114]

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20



765 177 533 [539] Parading around the unlit fire in the centre of the *milimika*, the performers chanted a telephone song, the literal translation of which is, "Hallo, that telephone there, hallo, yes, yes," some, as they did so, imitating the winding of the handle of an old-type magneto telephone.

When the fire, which had been started by a young man, was well alight, the men performed the ritual of *wandiatapinda* by jumping through flames and smoke, each shouting "telegraphy".

The men again assembled at the edge of the *milimika*, and, led by the *alowia*, called the localities on Melville Island where the white men had camped. As each name was called the aborigines shouted "*wia*" (yes).

One dancer held his hands high above his head, symbolizing a radio aerial, while his companions chanted the following words to the refrain of the telephone song:

[539] "The Queen sent a radio asking *Wurarbuti* and other men to dance for her."

Then followed songs related to the radio and the telephone. These were usually performed with the traditional steps and gestures, except that, at the end, the actor mimed the ringing up with one hand, and the holding of the [535] telephone to the ear with the other.[60] As the men danced, the women moved into the *milimika* from the side, performing their own dance, the *amburu* (Pl. 30B), some of them crying and endeavouring to beat themselves. They were, however, restrained by their companions.

765 After a number of dances came the ceremony of appointing the men to carry out the work near the grave.

[616] At the death of any person the tribe divides into two groups: the *puka-munis*, near relatives of the dead, who are forbidden to touch food with their hands (Pl. 24A), or go near the grave, and the distant relatives, who can visit the grave site without fear of attack from the spirit (the *mopaditi*).

At *Waniamperi's* first *ilania*, the ceremonial leader chose, from the latter group, ten men, the *wanaras*, colloquially called the "workers". It was their duty to cut and paint the burial poles (one each), help to clear the grave site and dancing ground of sticks and stones, and to carry out other menial tasks associated with the final rituals. For these tasks, the "workers" were paid on the last day of the rituals.

When "workers" were chosen, the aged brother, *Nalgui*, of the dead man,

[60] This mixture of the ancient and the modern, shows how a living culture gradually absorbs the characteristics of an adjacent people, particularly those from a culture as dominant as our own.

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announced that he had bought enough food from the store at the settlement to feed all the men who were to cut the poles.[61]

Following this announcement, the chief woman mourner, *Prupadau*, whose privilege it was to decide on the size of the burial poles, marked with her toe, in the dust of the *milimika*, the length and thickness of a series of oversized poles.

This led to a great deal of discussion between the leader, *Wurarbuti*, and the woman, *Prupadau*, before he finally persuaded her to reduce the dimensions of the poles to a reasonable size. *Prupadau* wanted the poles for her relative to be as many and as large as possible.

This matter settled, the "workers" brought a number of steel axes into the *milimika*. The *alouwia*, painting the handles white and putting red cross lines on the blades, stood the axes in the centre of the dancing ground. Then both the *alouwia* and the other performers walked around the axes singing the telephone song.

A series of traditional dances followed, representing *Jirakati*, the white-headed sea-eagle (Pl. 30), *Puruti*, the sea-osprey, and *Tjalati*, the jabiru (Pl. 29A).[62] Two women and two young boys performed the shark (*Taduwala*) dance (Pl. 25C), the ritual finishing with the honey and mosquito calls. The "workers" picked up their axes and walked away, accompanied by everyone except *Prupadau*, who remained behind, still chanting the *amburu* song of mourning.

### (*b*) *The Second Ilanias*

The second series of *ilanias* was performed about halfway between *Wurarbuti's* camp and the burial ground.

In this series, we were able to see the traditional pattern of the *ilanias* in operation, including the return and feeding of the "workers" after their day's labour of cutting the poles near the grave site. The songs and dances, too, instead of referring, as in the first *ilanias*, to the goods of the white man, his radio and his telephones, dealt almost exclusively with dances belonging to the locality of Wallu, north-eastern Melville Island, the country of *Waniamperi's* father and the totemic place of fresh water, *Andjalui* (p. 42).

This series of *ilanias* could be divided into five sections,

[61] At the present time, this is just a traditional gesture, reminiscent of the days when it was the duty of the *pukamuni* group to feed the workers while they cut and painted the poles (Pl. 23B).

[62] In a creation myth, the jabiru is called *Tipuru-undunga*. It is likely that the bird has several names. Hart (1930, p. 280), draws attention to the multiplicity of names among the Tiwi.

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(i) The ceremonial fight between the *pukamuni* men and the "workers" returning from cutting the poles which are near the grave.
(ii) The feeding of the "workers" by the *pukamuni* men and women.
(iii) The totemic songs and dances.
(iv) The *pumati*, in which married men and women beat the relatives of their spouses with boughs.
(v) The rite of fire-jumping (*wandiatapinda*).

(i) *The Ceremonial Fight.* When, late in the afternoon, the "workers" were returning to the *milimika* from the grave site, where they have been cutting the burial poles, they announced their coming with the honey and mosquito calls.

The *alouwia*, who had assembled the *pukamuni* men in the *milimika* in readiness for this ritual, answered with the honey call.

The "workers" emerged from the forest in a body and, running toward the men in the *milimika*, cast short sticks, as spears, at the *pukamuni* men, who replied vigorously with throwing sticks, neither group of contestants, however, trying to hit the other.

The "workers" having exhausted their spears, rushed into the *milimika*, where, to the accompaniment of much laughter and good-humour, they wrestled with the *pukamuni* men (Pl. 25D), until they (the "workers") were pushed out of the *milimika*.[63]

(ii) *The Feeding of the Workers.* It is the duty of the *pukamuni* group to feed the "workers" while they are cutting and painting the poles.

On the edge of the *milimika* were two baskets, both painted red, one made by a woman of the rain and freshwater totem of Wailu, and the other by a woman of the fire totem of Wuriupi, the totemic place of the dead man, *Waniamperi*. Food caught or gathered by the *pukamuni* men and women was cooked and placed in those baskets for the "workers" only, it being taboo to all members of the *pukamuni* group.

After the "workers" had been "vanquished" in the ceremonial fight, the *pukamuni* men carried the baskets[64] into the centre of the *milimika* and there stood guard while the "workers" had their meal (Pl. 25B).

[184] [775] [789]

[63] There is no clear-cut belief behind this ritual. Some informants said that the "workers", having been adjacent to the grave for many hours, were inhabited by *mopaditii* who must be driven out before the "workers" are "safe" to associate with the *pukamuni* group; others said that the *mopaditii*, following close on the heels of the "workers" had to be frightened away by what, to them, appeared to be a real fight, before the *ilunias* could start.

[64] These baskets, though they always stood on the edge of the *milimika*, were not often used in the *ilunias* we witnessed, as the participants were able to get most of the food they required from the settlement. If, however, the burial ceremony had been held at some remote place, the *pukamuni* men and women would have had to spend the day in hunting in order to provide food for the "workers".

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A



B



C



D

PLATE 24. *The Pukamuni Rituals*
A, Feeding Pukamuni Man; B, Rite of Wandiatapinda; C, The Grave; D, Belongings of Dead Man, Waniamperi.

Cp. 72 A]

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A



B



C



D

PLATE 25. *The Pukamuni Rituals*
A, Young Girls and Men Dancing; B, Feeding Pukamuni Workers; C, Women and Boys Dancing; D, Ceremonial Fight at Ilania.

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A B C D

PLATE 26. *The Final Pukamuni Rituals*
A, Erecting Poles on Grave; B, Arranging Gifts for Workers; C, The Basket Dance; D, Urumatjina's Dance.

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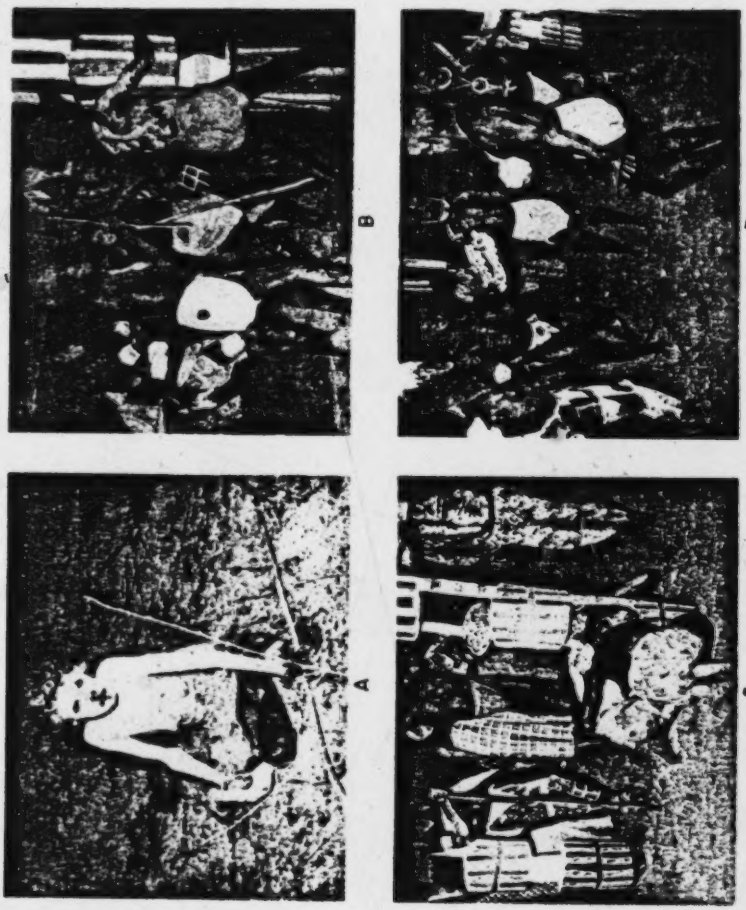


PLATE 27. *The Final Pukamuni Rituals*
A, Chief Woman Mourner; B, Scene at Burial Poles; C, Mourning at Burial Poles; D, Presentation of Gifts.

[p. 72 D]

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(iii) *The Totemic Songs and Dances.* At the completion of the meal, both the "workers" and the *pukamuni* men and women performed a series of dances to the accompaniment of traditional totemic songs. 765

Almost without exception, these songs and dances belonged to the totemic beings of Wailu, the country of *Tiparawilimiri*, the father of the dead man, *Wanimperi*.

These rituals were opened by the leader, who, standing in the centre of the *milimiku*, called out the names of the totemic beings of Wailu, *Andjalui* (fresh water), *Pukadringa* (thunderstorm), *Tomituka* (rain), and *Bumerali* (lightning). As before, the assembled aborigines shouted "*wia*" after each name was called.

The men then chanted the rain song, "The heavy rain falls and the frog calls, *poki, poki, puturuka*", while the men danced, with their fingers pointing to the ground, symbolizing falling rain (Pl. 30a), and the woman, *Prupadau*, hopped along the ground in imitation of the frog-woman,[64] *Kwouk-kwouk*. As the dance proceeded, the men and *Prupadau* all imitated the actions of the frog-woman by hopping along the ground on their hands and knees. [539] 765 535

While the dance was in progress, the leader called out "*Tomituka*" (rain). *Prupadau*, picking up a sheet of paper-bark, held it over her head and shivered, and the men, their hands clasped tightly over their heads, shouted, "*Batua, batua*" (rain finish). This completed the dance. *Pulanimbawi* danced the white-headed sea-eagle, *Jirakati* (Pl. 30j), before the *pumuti* began.

(iv) *The Pumuti.*[65] The *pumuti* rituals, which are always carried out with much goodwill, friendliness and laughter, were performed at most, if not all, of the *ilanias*, and, in a restricted form, at the final *pukamuni*. 765

At some stage, usually toward the end of the *ilania*, sometimes more than once, each man and woman, taking a bunch of leaves, or a roll of paper-bark and calling softly "*Ook, ook, ook*", beat the wife, or husband, sisters, brothers, and all the near relatives of that particular spouse.

(v) *The Rite of Fire-jumping and the sending out of the Message Sticks.* The rite of fire-jumping, or *wandiatapinda*, carried out in the second series of *ilanias*, differed from that in the first series. Instead of the participants stepping over a fire (Pl. 24a), a number of the close relatives climbed a tree at the base of which others lit a fire of grass and leaves (Pl. 23c). As each man 765 372

[64] The frog-woman, whose totemic place is Wailu, north-eastern Melville Island, is the mother of *Pukadringa*, *Tomituka* and *Bumerali*.

[65] This ritual would tend to reduce tensions between the spouse and his, or her, relatives, which is considerable in some communities. [593] [578]

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765 372 slipped down the tree and jumped clear of the fire, the other participants called his totemic name.

Toward the end of this series of *ilanias*, the "workers" announced that they had finished cutting the poles. The leader, the *alawia*, hearing this, gave permission for the poles to be "cooked", i.e., burnt in a fire of blazing boughs, to provide a black ground on which to paint the designs. The leader [202] also ordered that the *purunkinas* (message sticks, Figs. 5, 6, 7), be sent out to the various totemic groups. These sticks intimated that the final *pukamani* ceremonies would take place in about twenty days.

765 (c) *The Bathurst Island Ilanias*

About a week before the final burial rituals of *Waniamperi*, a number of aborigines from Bathurst Island, accompanied by their wives and *Kasopi*, the son of the dead man, made their camp and cleared a ceremonial ground not far from the second *milimika* used by the Melville Island people.

The Bathurst Island *ilanias*, under the leadership of an elderly aboriginal, *Jibunglialumi*, followed the traditional form, except that the first two phases were omitted, i.e., the fighting and the feeding of the "workers".

Three groups of songs were chanted to the accompaniment of the appropriate dances.

(i) The *Ningaui* songs and dances.
(ii) The mission lugger songs and dances.
(iii) The jabiru (*Tjalasi*) songs and dances.

(i) *The Ningaui Songs and Dances*

533 539 765 The leader, *Jibunglialumi*, and his companions chanted the following *Ningaui* songs. These are the literal translations.

"I am the head man of the *Ningaui*, I am, Eeh, Eeh."[97]

"I push aside the mangrove branches with my hands, Eeh, Eeh."

"The *Ningauis* are out hunting. The calls of the white cockatoos tell them that someone is coming, Eeh, Eeh."

A *Ningaui* woman, having just given birth to a child, sings—

"The flies are looking at me, the flies are crawling on my shoulder, Eeh, Eeh."

A *Ningaui* man, looking at his newly born child, sings—

"Little new-born man lying on the ground, Eeh, Eeh."

[825] [97] This is the call of the *Ningauis* which, the aborigines claim, they hear in the mangrove swamps of south-western Bathurst Island. It is possibly the call of one of the swamp birds.

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Neither *Jilungfiakuni* nor any of the Bathurst Islanders performed spirited dances to these songs. The leader, impersonating a *Ningwi*, walked round the *milimiko* with awkward, bent gait, either beating his music sticks together or holding his hands tightly against his sides with his fingers outstretched (Pl. 30E).

Following the *Ningwi* songs, the men lit a fire at the base of a eucalyptus tree which *Kwapi*, *Nangrinini*, and several other relatives of the dead man, climbed to perform the rite of *wundiatapinda*. As each man slid down the trunk, the aborigines called the totemic place of Waihu, and the names of rain, thunder and lightning. Later, the men performed the rain dance (Pl. 30B) in the *milimiko*, while the women, coming in from the side, danced the *amburu* (Pl. 30F).

(ii) *The Mission Lugger Songs and Dances*

The dances started with a long *ai, ai, ai*, which announced that the boat had been sighted. Then, while the men danced the sail of the boat, with their hands held above their heads, the leader chanted—

"The waves beat the sides of the boat, but it goes straight on."

With high prancing steps and hands rotating one over the other, the aborigines mimed the engines and the propeller of the lugger.

"The engines spark together as the waves hit the side of the boat."

Other songs, to which the performers danced the relevant actions, were—

"The wake of the lugger."

"The lugger is on the slips ready to be painted."

"We are scrubbing off the old paint and giving it a new coat."

Every time *Kwapi*, the son of the dead man, took part in the dance, the women set up a wail.

At the conclusion of the boat songs, the men and women took part in the *pumuti*, lightly beating each other's spouses and their relatives with boughs.

(iii) *The Jabiru Songs and Dances*

The last series of dances were given by a middle-aged Bathurst Island man, *Nikuma*, who imitated, with humorous gesticulation and much abandon, the antics of the long-legged jabiru, *Tjalati* (Pl. 29A), as it walked, fished and rested in the lagoon.

The words of the *Tjalati* song were—

"When *Tjalati* lifts one leg, he is ready to fly."

At the conclusion of the *Tjalati* dance, the *ilania* ended with the honey and mosquito calls.

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(2) *The Ilanias of Nulatini*

We were able to see the opening mourning rituals, *iramparini*[88] of *Nulatini* and six of her *ilanias*.

Rather than deal with all of these ceremonies in detail, I will describe the *iramparini* rituals and a typical *ilania*, in which the aborigines carried out all phases of the rituals, with the exception of the appointment of the "workers". Although the rite of *pumuti*, *wandiatapinda*, or feeding the "workers", did not take place at every *ilania*, they will be included in this description.

(a) *The Opening Mourning Ritual, Iramparini of Nulatini*

Ten days after the burial of *Nulatini*, the aborigines of Melville Island performed the ritual of *iramparini*. The function of that ceremony was to express grief over *Nulatini's* death, and to tell her spirit that, as she did not now belong to the same realm as themselves, she must leave her grave and return to her totemic country.

The ceremony was held about thirty yards from the camp of the dead woman. Most of the aborigines were present, but two men, *Pulanimbwi*, the husband, and *Tupiatira*, *Nulatini's* nearest relative, took the leading parts.

The rituals opened in the late afternoon with *Pulanimbwi*, painted in white, elaborately decorated and carrying a long stick, walking slowly toward the assembled people, singing the *amburu*, the women's song of mourning (Pl. 23A).

Every now and again, the husband stopped, leaned on his stick and looked round (apparently for his wife's *mopaditi*), before continuing on his way to the place of ceremony.

Coming out of the forest in an almost opposite direction was *Tupiatira*, also painted in white, waving green branches in his hands. About fifty yards from the old camp of *Nulatini*, *Tupiatira* called her name loudly, and, after listening for a while, announced that, as she had not answered, she must be dead.

As *Tupiatira* walked forward he continued to call, while *Pulanimbwi*, now accompanied by his sister, *Kundi*, came in from the opposite direction, both singing the *amburu*. When the men were only a few yards apart the aborigines formed themselves into two lines, facing each other.

At a signal and a loud "*Book, book*" from *Pulanimbwi*, an old man, *Malumerinita*, accompanied by six to eight of the men, danced between the

[88] The *iramparini* of *Wantampori* was performed before our arrival.

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lines as flying foxes (the totem of *Nulatini's* father),[99] their arms moving alternately up and down and their little fingers pointed skyward (Pl. 30c). [765] [535]

The dance finished, the assembled men accompanied by *Pulanimbuwi* and *Tupiatira*, with their arms around each other's necks, mourned hysterically for the dead, while the women danced the *amburu* on the outside of the group. Several times, in his grief, *Tupiatira* collapsed to the ground only to be lifted to his feet again by the still mourning husband.

The sounds of mourning continued for some time, gradually becoming less until *Nangrinini* gave the honey and mosquito calls, and the ceremony was over.

(*b*) *The Ilania*

At one end of the *milimika*, which was situated at the camp of the dead woman, was a pole on which *Pulanimbuwi* had tied a piece of printed calico as a flag.

The *ilania* opened when seven of the "workers" giving the honey and mosquito calls, emerged from the forest, and, running toward the *milimika*, cast sticks and pandanus leaves, as spears, at the *pukamuni* men who awaited them. There was general fighting and much laughter before the "workers" were ejected.

In the centre of the *milimika*, as food for the "workers" a woman had placed nine large cooked crabs which the "workers" distributed among themselves. After this was done, the men performed the rite of *wandiatapinda* by either walking through or jumping over the fire which had been lit in the *milimika*. *Nulatini's* husband did not take part in this ritual but, with a flat fighting stick in either hand, wandered about the ceremonial ground, singing the *amburu*. [262]

Following these rituals, the aborigines chanted a number of songs and carried out the following dances, those of the flying fox being totemically related to the dead woman's father. 533 765

(i) The flying foxes and the sea-eagle.
(ii) The crocodile.
(iii) The shark and the stingray.
(iv) The flag songs.

(i) *The flying-fox and sea-eagle songs*

"The flying foxes are out late, eating the blossoms of the stringy-bark and eucalyptus trees." [539]

[99] As mentioned earlier, the totem of the dead person is never referred to in the *pukamuni* rituals.

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533 "The sea-eagle, *Jirakui*, dives upon the flying foxes, catching them in
539 her claws and eating them. The rest fly away."
765 "The flying foxes call to each other, the sea-eagle is attacking us—let us go."

As these songs were being chanted, a number of men clustered in the centre of the *milimika*, like a group of flying foxes in a tree.

With a loud call, *Nangrinini*, his outspread arms symbolical of the wings of the sea-eagle, *Jirakui* (Pl. 301), "swooped" down, scattering them in all directions.

As *Nangrinini* returned to the outside of the *milimika*, the "flying foxes"
[535] reassembled and, with prancing steps again danced with their little fingers pointing upward (Pl. 30c).

The flying-fox songs continued—

"Cast your throwing sticks where the flying foxes are thickest and break many wings at one time."

"Hit the flying foxes so that they will drop in the mud."

"Cook the black flying foxes and dry them in the sun."[30]

Again the men assembled and danced the flying-fox while *Malumerinita* called the totemic places of the flying fox at Muranapi (p. 56), interspersed with calls of "*Wia*" from his companions. *Pulanimbuwi* still wandered.

(ii) *The crocodile songs*

"You cannot cross the river because it is full of crocodiles."

"Beware, the crocodiles are in the mangroves waiting to catch us when we cross the river."

These songs were accompanied by the spirited crocodile dance (Pl. 302),
[535] while *Malumerinita* called the names of the totemic places of the crocodile, *Jirakupai*, on south-west Bathurst Island.

(iii) *The shark and the stingray song*

"Do not spear the shark, it is chasing a stingray."

To this song several men performed the exhausting shark dance (Pl. 300).

(iv) *The flag songs*

"The wind blows and the flag moves."

[177] "The Government Administrator gets his flag from the Queen."
535 To these songs, the man danced with their hands, as a flag, moving above
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[30] This song suggests that the Melville Islanders stored or traded the cooked and dried bodies of these creatures.

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765 [535]

their heads. During these songs, the husband sat quietly at one end of the *milimika*, with his head in his hands (Pl. 23b).

The *ilania* concluded with *Nangrinini* calling *Aluprumani* (a mangrove bird); *Malumerinita* calling *Tjirinini* (the red-backed sea-eagle) and the assembled men, making the honey and mosquito call.

During one of the *ilanias* of *Nulatini*, a near relative had his name changed from *Miralipaiwa* to *Tukuwuinganili*.[73] [553]

(3) *The Ilanias of Makapini*

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At the same time as the *pukamuni* of *Waniamperi* was being performed, an old woman, *Makapini*, was baptized at Bathurst Island by the priest, just as she was dying, and, although she had never accepted Christianity, was buried, against the wishes of her relatives, in the mission cemetery.

765 [775]

The aborigines of both Bathurst and Melville Island were distressed over this incident because as *Makapini* had always been a "pagan" (as the mission authorities call the unconverted), her spirit could not go to the white man's "heaven", and, as the *pukamuni* ceremonies were prohibited on Bathurst Island, the spirit of *Makapini* was doomed to wander, lonely and unhappy, for ever. To prevent such a calamity (for lonely *mopaditis* are a danger to the living), the aborigines of Melville Island performed a modified *pukamuni*, called the *aramatruni-nipungari*,[74] so that, at its conclusion, the spirit of old *Makapini* would travel happily to her future home.

The pattern of this ceremony differed somewhat from that of *Waniamperi*. At a *milimika* near the camp of the ceremonial leader, *Malumerinita*, the Melville Island aborigines held five *ilanias* over a period of eight days. The final two days of the *pukamuni* were held among the poles.[75] I will describe a typical *ilania* and later the final *pukamuni* rituals.

The *ilania* opened with one of the "workers", who had been in the forest cutting the burial poles, running toward the *milimika*, stick in hand, giving the honey call. One of the *pukamuni* men rushed out to drive him away, but, after a sham fight with throwing sticks, brought him into the *milimika*.

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The predominating songs and dances of this and other *ilanias* of *Makapini* were associated with the mythical wild-honey people[76] of Bathurst Island.

[73] Hart (1930, pp. 280–99) describes how the custom of altering the names of near relatives at death causes rapid changes in the language.

[74] This type of *pukamuni* ceremony is also held when aborigines are drowned at sea and their bodies not recovered. [766]

[75] This was a variation of the previous *pukamuni*, probably because the body was not at the place of ceremony.

[76] Although I did not inquire, it is certain from the songs, that the father or mother of the dead woman belonged to one of the honey totems of Bathurst Island.

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765 533 [535] Many of them referred to "creation times" when *Tulimbini*, of Murupiangu told the honey people of Bathurst Island to be the *pukamuni* men and women at the burial rituals of *Purukupali* (p. 30).

The following is a selection of the honey songs—

[539] "Let all the men who are *mandalini* (a eucalyptus flower, particularly rich in honey) come to this place (Tapararimi) and dance for the *pukamuni* of *Purukupali*."

"With all your ornaments, start walking (to Tapararimi)."

"Bring all your ceremonial ornaments to our place (Tapararimi) where we will hold a big ceremony."

Another man chanted a lengthy song describing the death of *Purukupali*, and another, which instructed the performers, at the conclusion of the rituals, to take the cane rings, *jairinis* (Pl. 31H) from their arms and leave them on the grave.

The songs and dances about *Purukupali*, the honey people of Bathurst Island, and their doings at the first *pukamuni*, were followed by another series which related specifically to the collecting of wild honey. In all these [535] performances, the men carried out the honey dance with high knee action, their hands held above their heads and their fingers pointing upward (Pl. 30D).

One man sang about a fly that lives in the hives of wild bees and about a large hive in a tree with a long snout (entrance) and much honey. Then, accompanied by several others, he mimed the action of bees flying in and out of a hive; the aborigines locating the hive, climbing the tree, cutting off the limb containing the hive, and eating the honey. These dances were followed by the ceremonial leader, *Malumerinita*, calling out the totemic places of honey, most of them on Bathurst Island. As each name was called, the assembled aborigines shouted "*wia*".

A young man started to sing about a pearling lugger, but was told by old *Tjamalampua* to stop and use only the *palaneri* songs. The same man then [535] danced the actions of the jabiru, *Tjalari*, to the appropriate song (p. 75), and one relating to the buffalo,[78] to the accompaniment of "*Prr, prr, papringipali*" (go away big eye, prr, prr), then a song of *Aruni*, the poison fish: "*Aruni aruni, drr, drr, drr*", which referred to the sinking of a boat, the *W'anganui*, off south-western Bathurst Island.[79]

[825] [78] The aborigines believe that the buffalo, brought to Fort Dundas in 1824, belong to the *palaneri* (creation) period.

[79] The *aruni* is a spiny poisonous fish (possibly the stone fish), which was supposed to have sunk the *W'anganui* by driving its spines through the ship's bottom. The *drr, drr*, of the song represents the sounds of the spines as they were driven into the ship.

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The two forms of fire-jumping (described earlier, p. 73) were also used in these rituals. 765

The *ilanis* closed with the performance of the rite of *pumuti*, then the usual honey and mosquito calls.

### 3. THE FINAL PUKAMUNI RITUALS

#### (1) *The Pukamuni of Waniamperi*

For the sake of simplicity I will describe, under this heading, the rituals carried out during the last two days of the closing phases of the *pukamuni* ceremony of *Waniamperi*. These rituals took place about three months after burial and about a month after the performance of the first *ilania* and the receiving of the message stick (Fig. 51F, G, H) from the Bathurst Island aborigines. [202]

During these final ceremonies, the aborigines divided themselves into two groups; the Melville Island men and women, under the leadership of *Wurarbuti*, and the Bathurst Island men and women, with a few of the Melville Island aborigines linked with them totemically, under their leader, *Jibunglialumi*. [616]

The "workers" had cleared two dancing grounds: one, Fig. 4A, about fifty yards south of *Waniamperi's* grave, belonging to the Melville Island aborigines, and the other, Fig. 4B, about thirty yards east, to the people from Bathurst Island.

There were seven decorated burial poles on *milimika*, A, and three on B (Fig. 4). The three poles, although cut and painted by the local men, had been given, with their permission, to the Bathurst Island group who were responsible for the payment of them. [432]

The final rituals extended over two days. After both groups had performed *ilanias* in the middle of the first morning, they spent about six hours decorating each other with elaborate facial and body designs, one of which, that of *Wurarbuti*, is illustrated on the frontispiece. Other facial designs are illustrated on Pl. 28. In the late afternoon all the participants, men and women, moved to the two *milimikas* near the grave (Fig. 4A, B), where they performed a series of dances until dark. The aborigines camped nearby, most of them within a hundred yards of the grave. The next morning the final rituals started. [302]

These *pukamuni* rituals can be divided into five distinct phases—

(*a*) The opening rituals.

(*b*) The songs and dances.

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●765 (c) The payment of the "workers".
(d) The erecting of the poles.
(e) The final mourning rituals.

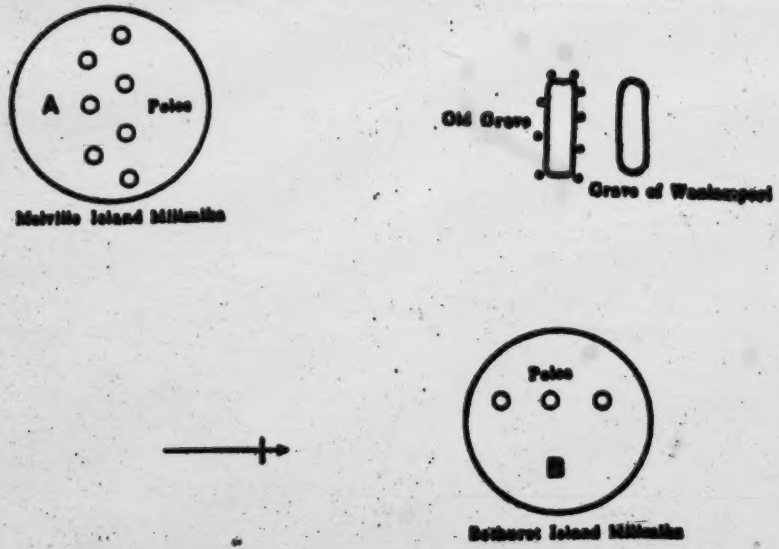


FIG. 4. *Ceremonial Ground, Wanamperi's Pukamani*

### (a) *The Opening Rituals*

Early on the first morning, the men, women and children left the main camp and travelled to a temporary ceremonial ground, in the forest, about three hundred yards east of the grave.

The Melville Island group, under *Wurarkuti*, assembled straightaway and performed a small *ilania*, in which some of the men, after the usual honey and
[533] mosquito calls, started to chant the rain song of *Tomituka*, whilst others either lit a fire and crouched over it, or sheltered under pandanus trees, shivering as if wet and cold.

As the song changed to the *impok, impok*, of the frog-woman, several men
[535] and the woman, *Prupadau*, hopped around the *milimika* in imitation of a frog (Pl. 29D).

When the Melville Islanders dispersed to paint themselves, the Bathurst Island men, under *Jibunglialumi*, performed another *ilania* on the same spot.

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The leader started a song describing a fight in which the dead man, *Wantamperi*, had taken part. To this refrain, the performers mimed the action of men struggling together, beating each other with throwing sticks, or casting spears. [539] [535]

In the middle of this performance, *Katopi*, the son of the dead man, rushed into the forest beating himself with a throwing stick, followed by his step-mother, *Dominao*, who forcibly disarmed him. At the conclusion of the dance, and when quiet was restored, *Nilitumo* carried out the same jabiru dance we had seen at the Bathurst Island *ilania* a few days previously (Pl. 29A). At the conclusion of the jabiru dance the Bathurst Islanders retired to paint themselves for the final rituals. In general, the "workers" painted the leading *pukamuni* men, some husbands painted their wives, their children and themselves. [535]

In the late afternoon, the assembled men, women and children, their faces and bodies painted with the most elaborate designs, and decorated with colourful *pukamuni* ornaments (frontispiece), made their way along the road, calling continuously in the high-pitched mosquito call until within a hundred yards of the grave. At that point the two groups separated. Each group lit a fire and carried out, first the rite of *wandiatapinda*, followed by a basket dance (later to be performed at the grave side (Pl. 26C), then went to their respective *milimikas* (Fig. 4A, B). [302]

Pausing only to assemble at those places, both groups of people rushed across the open space and threw themselves on the bushes covering the grave, wailing heart-brokenly. *Katopi*, the son of the dead man, who fell on the belongings of his father at the base of a tree (Pl. 24D), tried to cut his head with a knife, but was restrained, as before, by his step-mother, *Dominao*, who led him back to the Bathurst Island *milimika*. This was a signal for everyone to return to their respective *milimikas* and perform the first of a series of dances.

In the Bathurst Island circle, *Nangrinini* danced a canoe dance, paddling and bailing a miniature bark canoe as he pushed it along the ground. [535]

As the Melville Island group were chanting their songs, five men sneaked up to the grave, one of their number peered among the bushes, crawled back to his crouching companions and whispered something to them. At this they all called out loudly, ran back into their *milimika* and carried out a vigorous, almost hysterical dance. [535]

The same performance was repeated, but on the second occasion *Marawani*, one of the chief mourners, ran to the grave, speared it in several places,

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765 then, with the group, returned quietly to their companions among the poles."[77]

*(b) The Songs and Dances*[78]

On the return to *milimika* A (Fig. 4), *Wurarbuti* and his wife mimed, to the accompaniment of appropriate songs, paddling a canoe, with their hands around one of the poles. This was followed by a man and his wife, who acted, with considerable detail, the making of a bark canoe; stripping the bark from [396] the tree; holding the bark over a fire to make it flexible; folding the bark and sewing the ends together, and the final launching.

By the time this act was over, it was dark. The aborigines from both *milimikas* retired to the nearby forest, lit their fires and cooked their food. There were no ceremonies during the evening, except, occasionally, some woman left her camp and wailed among the deserted *pukamuni* poles.

533 About 8 o'clock on the morning of the last day, the *pukamuni* men opened
539 the ceremonies with the honey and mosquito calls. These calls were followed
765 by a number of songs, chanted by *Wurarbuti* and some of his companions, which referred to the mythical boobook owl-man, *Purujikini*, and the instructions he gave to his fellow performers at the first *kulama* ceremony (p. 123). They were:

"Make the *milimika* large and clean for many people and when it is ready, sing first, then dance round the ring."

"You will paint yourself beside the *milimika*."

"When you decorate yourself for the *kulama*, put white on one side of your face, yellow on the other, and red down the middle of your hair. And as you dance, your wives will help you, as my wife, *Pinsoma*, the owl-woman, once did for me."

"You sing, *Mikinatrina*[79] (a *kulama* initiate), and we will follow."

"When you sing in a *kulama*, put the cockatoo feathers, *primitiki*, in your hair, and the wind will shake them."

While those songs were being chanted, other men mimed the appropriate action.

[77] Although the aborigines did not explain the ritual, it is likely that the first man looked for and thought he saw the *mopaditi* of *Waniamperi*. On the second occasion, *Marawuni*, a near relative, hunted the dead man's spirit away. This ritual, in a modified [114] form, took place at the two other *pukamunis* we witnessed. Spencer (1928, p. 648) mentions the same ritual.

[78] The songs and dances in this series were neither traditional nor totemic. They were composed usually by a number of performers, especially for the occasion, and quite an amount of thought went into their production.

[79] During the initiation of the *Mikinatrina* at the *kulama* ceremony, he performs his first dance amid general applause.

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During this performance an old man, *Nalauri*, *Waniamperi's* brother, reprimanded, in the native tongue, a group of young aborigines for not taking a more active part in the *pukamuni* rituals.

"Don't hang around there like a mob of whites," he said. "If you're standing while there's a dance, beat your buttocks, or if you're sitting, either clap your hands or beat the ground with a stick."

At the conclusion of the Melville Island performance, the Bathurst Islanders continued the songs and dances in their own *milimika* (Fig. 42), about *Purutjikini* and the first *kulama*.

The leader, *Jibungliatumi*, chanted how, at the first *kulama*, *Purutjikini* said to his companions, "I'll give you the songs, then you'll dance about the things around you." As he did so, *Nangrinini* performed the dance of the turtle. "Then as the next song was being chanted," *Purutjikini* said, "you will cook the *kulama*." Another man picked up a *pukamuni* basket, and, calling "*brr, brr, brr*" (as they do in the *kulama* ceremonies), emptied the supposed contents on the ground in imitation of pouring out the *kulama* yams preparatory to putting them in the earth oven (p. 137). *Jibungliatumi* then followed with the dance of the owl man, *Purutjikini*, with his hands held around his eyes (Pl. 29a), ending his dance with "*Ah, oo, ah, oo*", the call of the present-day boobook owl.

The Melville and Bathurst Island groups then moved from the distant to the grave side of their burial poles (Fig. 4) and performed the *pumuti* rituals. On this occasion, however, only husbands and wives beat each other.

The *pumuti* was followed by *Urumatjina* from Melville Island, chanting a song he had composed for the occasion which described how the dead man, *Waniamperi* had become involved in a fight at a *pukamuni* ceremony.[80]

Some men, listening intently to *Urumatjina*, joined in as soon as they had learned the song, while others performed the dance miming the action of men fighting.

Another part of the same song told how a woman, *Purpurangmio* (since dead) loudly abused the men because so many of them attacked her husband at one time. To add reality to the performance, *Urumatjina* pounded the side of a *pukamuni* basket with a stick to indicate the noise made by the angry woman (Pl. 26b).

The theme of the songs then returned to the *kulama* ceremony. As some men chanted, others laid sheets of paper-bark on the ground, and to the *kulama* thunder-call they imitated the actions of rubbing the *kulama* yam on

[80] This is the same fight as the one enacted in the Bathurst Island *ilaria* on the previous day (p. 83).

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765 their bodies (p. 138). Again, a man picked up a *pukamuni* basket, symbolised the pouring out of the cooked *kulama* yam on a sheet of bark and patted it to the *kulama* call of "*Brr, brr, brr*". This action completed the dance.

(c) *The Payment of the Workers*

431 765 While other dances, which I did not see, were being performed in the two *milimikas*, the *pukamuni* men and their wives unpacked the gifts for the "workers", and spread them out on the ground (Pl. 26B). There was much good-natured discussion about their equitable distribution before the presents were finally separated into lots and placed one on the top of each pole.

177 533 765 [302] *Wurarbuti*, resplendent in his body paint and coloured *pukamuni* ornaments, mounted one of the larger poles and chanted songs telling how he became possessed of the great wealth which enabled him to buy the presents for the "workers".

[539] "I am a big Government man," he boasted, "so I was able to get plenty of money."

"I stole the money from the Government to pay for the presents and the police locked me up."

[535] While *Wurarbuti* chanted this song, *Marawani* and the women danced with their hands crossed as if in handcuffs.

As the song continued, *Marawani* ran after *Pulanimbuwi*, dragged him into the *milimika*, and struggled with him in imitation of a policeman making an arrest.

Other songs were chanted ridiculing a Government clerk at Darwin, while one of them "wrote" out an order, passed the "money" to a *pukamuni* man through a window (an opening in a pole) and then demanded, in a loud domineering voice, his thumb-print on a scrap of paper as a receipt.

177 431 765 *Wurarbuti*, still seated on the top of a pole, started to distribute the presents, imitating, as he did so, the actions and broken English which the same clerk used when dealing with aborigines.

"You a worker," said *Wurarbuti*. "Have you a wife? How many children? You work for me, make proper good pole, I pay you."

The "worker" on accepting his payment, put his thumb-print on a scrap of paper (initialled—with a twig—by another *pukamuni* man), and walked away satisfied[81] with his square of printed calico, pipes and tobacco. As each "worker" received his gift the *pukamuni* men performed a dance.

[81] This is not always so. Sometimes a "worker" becomes so annoyed over inadequate payment that he will not allow his pole to be carried to the grave, preferring to let it rot in the forest. On several occasions we saw a pole which had been left in the forest because its maker was dissatisfied with the payment.

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When all the "workers" had been paid, *Wurarbuti* called my name and presented me with a number of *pukamuni* arm and chest ornaments (Pl. 31), which normally would have been left on the grave.

These ornaments, *Wurarbuti* explained, were a gift from the dead man, *Waniamperi*, because I had assisted in making his *pukamuni* a success.[88]

In the Bathurst Island *milimika* the three "workers" were also receiving their payments.

*Jibunglialumi*, although he did not have as good a story to tell as *Wurarbuti*, danced around the poles with some of the presents in his hand, singing, "Here I come in an expensive motor-car, with lots of money to pay the 'workers' for cutting such beautiful poles."[89]

### (*d*) *Erecting the Poles around the Graves*

The distribution of the last of the presents was a signal for the "workers" to carry the poles from the respective *milimikas* to the grave.

Some of the poles were both large and heavy; in particular that illustrated on Pl. 34D, which was eighteen feet long, and so heavy that it took seven "workers" to carry it from the *milimika* and up-end it in the hole prepared for it at the grave (Pl. 26A).

As the poles were carried past the Bathurst Island ceremonial ground, *Jibunglialumi* threw short sticks over them to commemorate the time when the skinny fish, *Pipinjawari*, took part in a spear-throwing contest at the *pukamuni* of *Purukupali* (p. 33).

While the "workers" nonchalantly carried the poles to the grave, the women, with tears running down their cheeks, beat themselves with sticks (until someone restrained them), and the close male relatives, mourning loudly, hysterically cut their heads with steel knives.

*Katopi*, the son of the dead man, had washed the painted decorations from his body, and was about to cut his head when he was stopped by his step-mother, *Dominao*. On seeing this, *Marawani*, one of the chief *pukamuni* men, took the knife from the woman and gave it to *Katopi*, who gashed his head two or three times, and, with blood pouring down his face, threw himself on the ground in a paroxysm of grief.

[88] To help them in their payments I had given the *pukamuni* men some printed calico.

[89] Although these stories about great wealth to pay the "workers" are much Europeanised, they are probably following a traditional pattern, when, instead of referring to money and the goods of the white man, the ceremonial leaders exaggerated the number of spears, ornaments, and other goods they had collected to pay the "workers".

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(e) *The Final Mourning Rituals*

●765 As soon as the poles were in place the "workers" pulled away the bushes covering the grave. This was a signal for the closing phases of the final rituals. Everyone, men and women, from both Melville and Bathurst Islands, rushed forward and threw themselves on top of one another at the base of the burial poles, until the ground, and even the grave itself, was covered with a mass of human beings, each mourning heartbrokenly.

[302] After a period of mourning, *Jibungliakumi* and *Wurarkuti* rose to their feet, cut off the beards they had grown for the occasion,[84] and washed the painted decorations from their bodies, while the mourners, assembling close [535] to the poles, impersonated, in almost hysterical dance and song, the shark, the rain-woman, the jabiru, and many other mythical heroes of creation times.

*Nangrinini*, assisted by his wife, first performed the basket dance (Pl. 26c),[85] then once more the dance of the bark canoe. *Pulanimbuwi*, who danced beside him, acted the part of *Jirakati* (Pl. 30j), the sea-eagle, swooping down on its prey.

The return of the ceremonial leaders to the grave was the signal for another exhibition of mass hysteria. Weeping women, beating themselves with sticks, threw themselves on the top of the grave, while men, leaning over the burial poles, mourned continuously in high-pitched wails.

Gradually the sounds of lamentation became less. One by one the mourners left, until there remained only the crouching body of *Waniamperi's* widow, painted entirely in black, a little wizened woman, whose span of life was almost spent.

(2) *The Final Pukamuni of Makapini*

(a) *The Opening Rituals*

[302] A little before sunset, the Melville Island men and women assembled to decorate themselves for the final rituals, while *Kitapipatu* (Pl. 27A), a sister of the dead woman, *Makapini*, carrying a long stick, and painted entirely in white, wandered among the *pukamuni* people, crying the *amburu* song.

[184] The body decorations finished, which neither took as long, nor were as elaborate as at the *pukamuni* of *Waniamperi*, the performers assembled about twenty yards from the three burial poles (Pl. 34A, B, F), which the "workers" had hidden from view by a screen of boughs.

[177] [84] Before the days of the white man, the Tiwi men did not cut their beards at the final *pukamuni*, but plucked them out in handfuls. Spencer, 1928, p. 673, Fig. 467, both illustrates and records having seen this curious ritual in the *kulama* ceremony.

[85] Mountford, 1956, p. 434.

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PLATE 29. *Totemic Dances*
A, Jabiru, Tjalati; B, Owl, Pintoma; C, Lizard, Kilpuruni; D, Frog, Kwouk-kwouk.

[Cf. 88 A]

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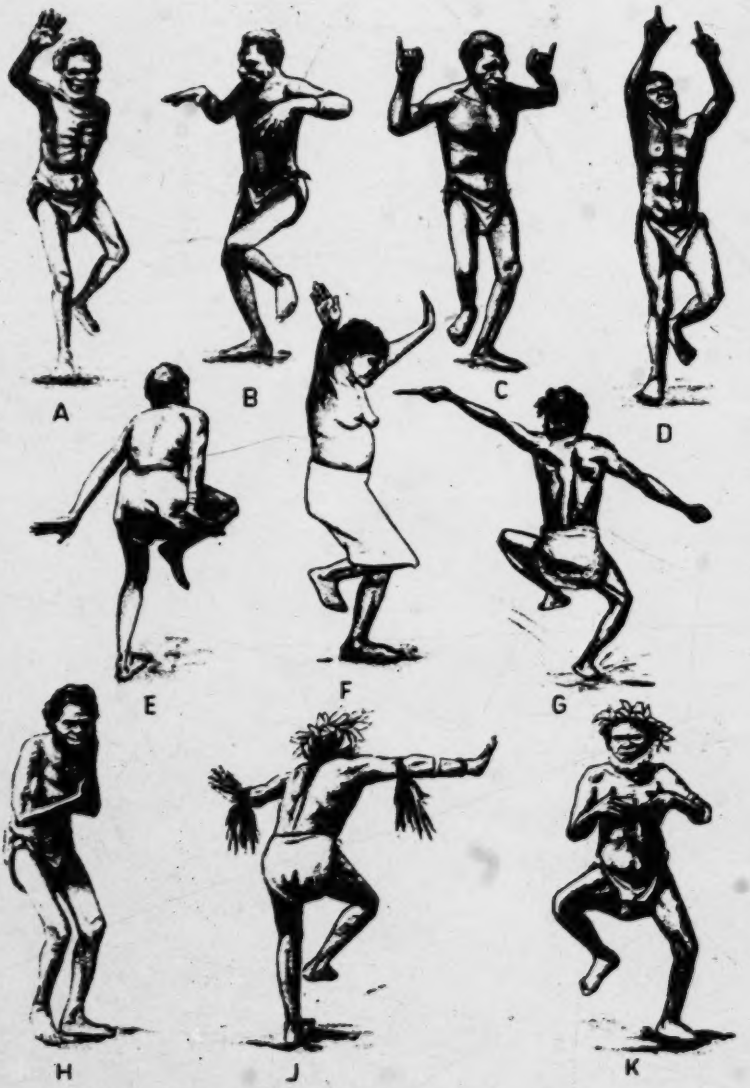


PLATE 30. *Totemic Dances*
A, Moon; B, Rain; C, Flying Fox; D, Wild Honey; E, Crocodile; F, Amburu; G, Shark; H, Skinny Fish; J, Sea-eagle; K, Ningaui.

[p. 88 B]

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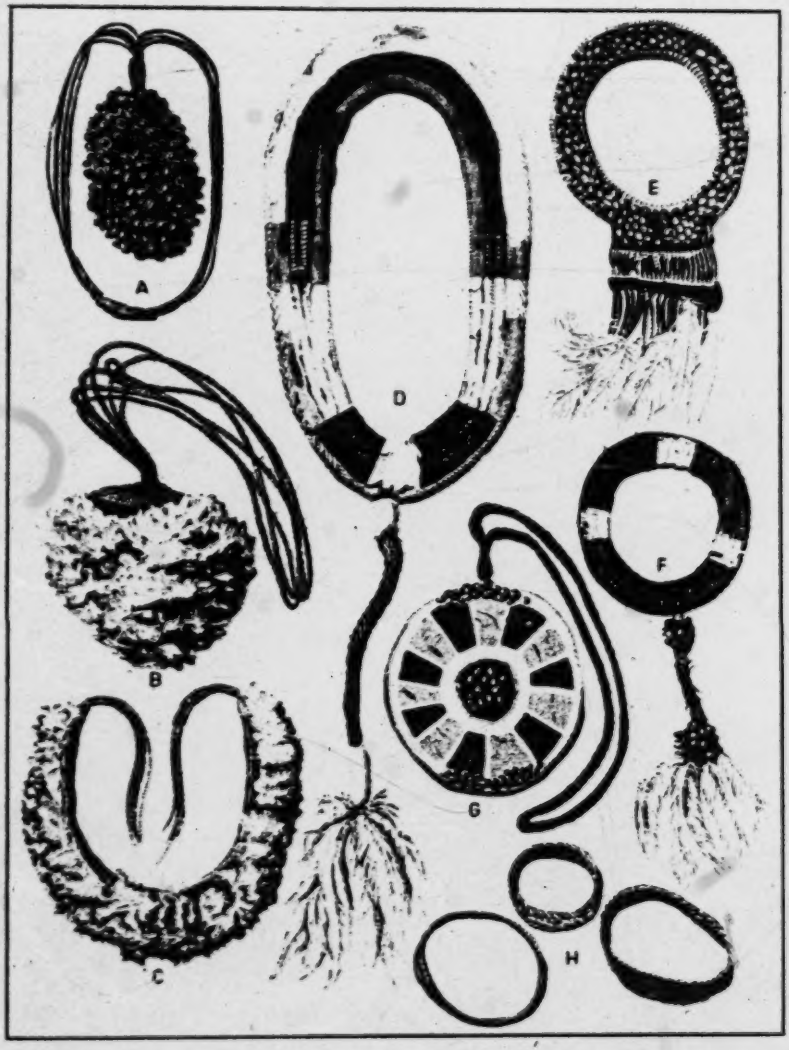


PLATE 31. *Ceremonial Decorations*
A, D, G, Chest Ornaments, Pukabinda; B, Goose-feather Ball, Tokwianga; C, False Beard, Baludi; E, F, Arm Ornaments, Palmatjinas; H, Cane Arm Bands, Jairinis.

[p. 84 C]

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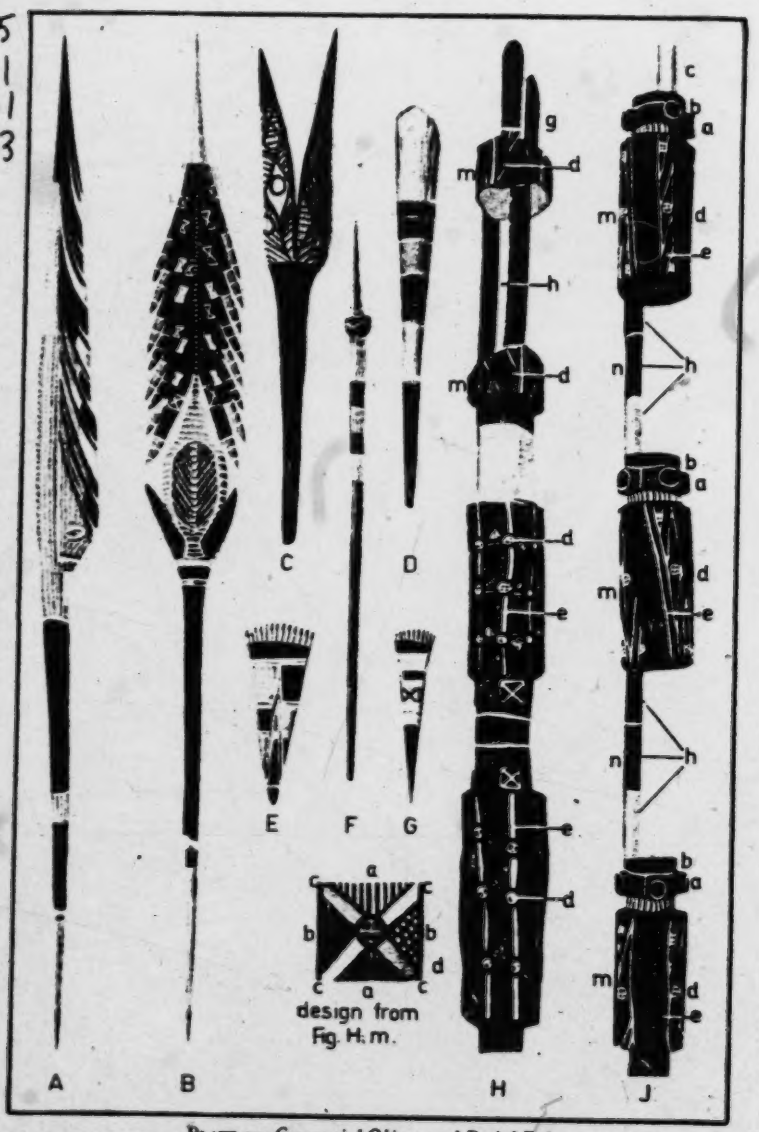


PLATE 32. *Ceremonial Objects and Burial Poles*
A, Male Pukamuni Spear, Tunkaringa; B, Female Pukamuni Spear, Tunkaguni; C, Forked Throwing Stick, Miluanta; D, Plain Throwing Stick, Muruguna; E, G, Tool, Porta, for Body Painting; F, Scratching Stick, Murubunga; H, J, Pukamuni Burial Poles.

[p. 88 D]

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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The ceremony opened with the honey call, then, as the men stepped across a fire lit in the centre of the *milimika* (Pl. 24B), a long sustained mosquito call. Following this, the men formed a circle around the fire, and chanted a song which described the bombing of a ship off the coast of Bathurst Island.

Close female relatives, standing in a line facing the poles, sang the *amburu*, while three men, painted white, each carrying a spear, rushed toward the screen of boughs, peered through them, then returned to the *milimika*. Three other men were given spears, one of whom, with a *tokwianga* (goose-feather ball) in his mouth, took a stand as if to throw a spear at the poles, remarking to his companions as he did so, that he was about to spear a *mopaditi*.

As soon as the "workers" removed the boughs which shielded the poles from view, an old woman, *Jibandaui*, ran forward and beat the ground near the poles, while the six men, with spears poised ready, followed and stabbed around the base of the poles. These rituals, the signal for all the participants to rush to the grave poles and (Pl. 27B) mourn, were carried out to frighten the *mopaditis* from the vicinity of the grave.

A young man with his head and shoulders through an opening in one of the poles, and his arm around an old woman, sobbed bitterly (Pl. 27C) while others stood around either crying or singing the *amburu*.

As the sounds of grief became less, a young man, miming a killing which had taken place some time ago, sneaked up with great stealth, and "speared" *Tjamalampua* who was lying on the ground in the *milimika*.[88] Shortly afterwards the ceremony closed with the usual honey and mosquito calls.

*(b) Songs and Dances*

The next morning about 10 a.m., the ceremonies started afresh. On this occasion, all of the songs and dances dealt with secular incidents; a crocodile creeping upon a man to kill him, an aboriginal sailing a European racing boat, another paddling a bark canoe, still another spearing an enemy, and so on.

Several of the aborigines created much laughter by miming the actions of our physical anthropologist, Dr. Carleton Coon, who had just completed a series of body measurements and observations on the Melville Islanders.

One man, using a short stick, measured the arms, legs and body of old *Tjamalampua* as he lay stretched out full length on the ground; he then danced around the *milimika* with his hands round his head, in imitation of the head callipers; another mimed Dr. Coon weighing an aboriginal, cutting his hair and looking at his teeth.

[88] Spencer, 1928, p. 651, describes a similar episode. No doubt the spearing of Tjamalampua had a much deeper symbolism than appeared at the time.

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765 533 *Wurarbuti* described, in song and dance, how some aborigines from the northern end of the island had tried to kill his father, but the father, being forewarned, had run into the mangrove swamp for shelter. A spear, however, thrown by his enemies, hit him in the side but did not kill him.

[535] [177] Then followed a long series of songs and dances, made up by *Wurarbuti*, describing how the mechanics from Darwin erected a large steel tank at the nearby settlement. To the chanting of songs and beating of buttocks, the actors "rolled" the tank (actually a small log) along the ground, tilted it on one end, rigged blocks and tackle and lifted the "tank" in place. These dances lasted about a half an hour.

Toward the end of this performance, which finished about mid-day, a woman, *Narlaui*, painted entirely in white, and carrying a throwing stick, called upon the dead woman to fight her because, at one time she, *Narlaui*, had reprimanded her for running after men. The aborigines applauded her when she had finished her song. Emboldened by this, *Narlaui* stood in front of one of the poles and challenged the dead woman to a fight.

[535] [177] The ceremony finished[97] with an aeroplane dance, the men posturing in a similar manner to that of the *Jirakati* dance (Pl. 30J).

About sunset, the rituals started afresh with the usual honey and mosquito calls.

*Pulanimbuwi* and *Muramajua*, acting the part of little children, struggled with each other in the dust of the *milimika* while one of them sang,

[539] "You can't drink from the same breast as I can because we have different mothers."

Old *Malumerinita*, taking up the same refrain, pushed the two "children" aside as he sang,

[539] "I'm a big man, so I'll drink the milk."

*(c) The Payment of the Workers*

765 It was after dark before the three "workers", who had cut and painted the burial poles, received their payment (Pl. 27D). As each *pukamuni* man passed the goods, loin cloths, and tobacco to the "worker", he cut his head with a knife, and started a dance in which even a number of little girls took part (Pl. 25A). They had been told by some of the older women what to do, so that the youngsters would be conversant with the woman's place in the rituals.

[535] [868]

[97] This ceremony would have probably, like that of *Waniamperi*, finished at mid-day had not the Superintendent of the settlement insisted on sending the chief woman mourner to a distant locality from which she had been unable to return on time.

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*(d) The Final Mourning Rituals*

By this time the chief woman mourner, painted entirely in red, had arrived. On reaching the ceremonial ground, she charged against a pole, then leaned over it, crying heartbrokenly. Another woman, *Dominao*, in paroxysms of grief, threw herself on the ground at the base of another pole, while still another woman, dancing the *emburu* before the third pole, told the *mopaditi* of the dead woman, in a song "to keep away from me".

The ceremony finished, like that of *Waniamperi's pukamuni*, with concerted wailing around the poles.

*(g) The Pukamuni of Inbidjarmeri's Infant*

This simplified *pukamuni* was held for a premature child of *Inbidjarmeri*. The child died, about a month previously, at the Darwin hospital. The complete rituals, though curtailed, having occupied only two hours, followed the normal pattern with two exceptions. The *pukamuni* group did not employ any "workers" to cut the burial poles, and, as the body had not been brought to Melville Island, the ceremonies were held at the grave of a young child, of the same parents, who had died about two years previously.

A distant relative, appointed by the father of a "worker" had burnt the grass, cleared a space adjacent to the grave as a dancing ground and draped a turtle rope around the old poles in which had been twisted the wing feathers of geese.[88] For these duties he was given two loin cloths.

There were no dances at the first *ilania* which took place about three hundred yards from the burial site, only prolonged honey and mosquito calls.

The *pukamuni* group then moved to within a hundred yards of the grave where, after more honey and mosquito calls, they lit the *wandiatapinda* fire, and walked through its smoke and flames.

At the commencement of the final rituals, most of the group halted behind a rope, stretched between two trees, over which the "worker" had hung bagging and blankets;[89] but others rushed forward, spears in hand, and, as in the two previous *pukamunis*, stabbed at the base of the poles surrounding the grave to drive away the *mopaditis*.

After this, everyone moved to the grave-side of the screen, the men carrying out a series of dances while the women, beating themselves with sticks, leaned on the *pukamuni* poles and mourned.

While some of the *pukamuni* men chanted a song about the red-fruited eugenia, *binamia*, *Muramajua*, walking around the *milimika*, imitated a

[88] I did not find out the significance of this custom.
[89] This took the place of the screen of boughs used in the normal rituals.

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*Unidentified*

The designs on Pl. 28T are the same as those painted on the face of the chief mourner, *Kasapi*, at *Waniamperi's* final *pukamuni*. I did not ask about their meanings. 302 778

Although I did not learn the meanings of the facial designs on the remaining faces on Pl. 28, it is reasonable to suppose they all referred to some mythological story, probably associated with the totem of the aboriginal who wore them.

### 7. THE PUKAMUNI DANCES

A number of the dances we saw at the *ilanias* and final *pukamuni* rituals belonged exclusively to certain Tiwi totemic groups. They were so constant in form that, in no time, we could recognize the dance and the totem to which it belonged. [794] 765 535

Many of these dances are more strenuous than any belonging to the mainland; some of them, indeed, so strenuous, i.e., the crocodile (Pl. 30B), the shark (Pl. 30C), or the sea-eagle (Pl. 30J), that they seldom lasted more than a minute. [171]

Although I recorded only fourteen of these totemic dances (illustrated on Pls. 29 and 30), I feel sure that these represent but a small proportion of those performed by the Tiwi. For instance, none of the totemic dances belonging to the dead person would have been performed at the burial rituals we witnessed.

Pl. 29A is the dance of the jabiru, *Tjalasi*, which was performed with such skill and abandon by *Nilitawa* at the Bathurst Island *ilania* of *Waniamperi's pukamuni* ceremony.

Pl. 29B is the dance of the boobook owl, *Purutjikini*, who with his wife, the barn-owl, *Pintoma*, organized the second *kulama* ceremony on Turiturina Island, western Bathurst Island. The dancer is indicating the large eyes of the boobook owl.

Pl. 29C is the dance of the blanket-lizard, *Kilpuruni*, who was punished by *Jurumu*, the wedge-tailed eagle, because the former seduced *Jurumu's* wife. The dancer walked around the ceremonial ground with an awkward gait, in imitation of the blanket-lizard's curious method of locomotion.

Pl. 29D pictures the frog-woman, *Kwouk-kwouk*, who is the mother of the man of the thunderstorms, *Pakadringa*, the woman of the monsoon rain, *Tominuka*, and the lightning woman, *Bumerali*. The frog dance was performed many times at the *ilanias* of *Waniamperi*, the frog being the totem of his father.

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Pl. 30A is the moon-man, *Tjapara*, who fought with *Purukupali* during the creation period. The bent, upraised arm of the dancer symbolizes the crescent moon.

Pl. 30B is the dance of the rain-woman, *Tomiuka*, who lives at Wailu with her brother, sister and her mother, the frog-woman, *Kwouk-kwouk*. The fingers pointing downward symbolize the falling rain.

Pl. 30C illustrates the dance of the flying-fox, *Murungimpili*, whose totemic place is at Kialili lagoon, southern Melville Island. This dance was frequently performed at the *ilanias* of *Nulatini*, her father being a flying-fox man. The dancer, with high steps, moved his arms alternately up and down, with the little fingers pointing upward.

Pl. 30D is the dance of wild honey. In this dance the performer, dancing vigorously around the ceremonial ground, pointed upward, as if to indicate the position of a hive of wild bees.

Pl. 30E is the spirited dance of the crocodile, *Jirakupai*, who, during creation times, transformed himself into a crocodile to escape his enemies. This was not often performed in the burial ceremonies we witnessed.

Pl. 30F is the *amburu*, the women's dance of mourning. When the men are performing in the ceremonial circle, the women come in from the left-hand side performing the *amburu*. I did not collect any specific myth about this dance, except that it has been performed by the women ever since the *pukamuni* of *Purukupali*.

Pl. 30G is the dance of the shark, *Tudawala*, probably the most strenuous dance in aboriginal Australia. It is performed only by young men, women and children, the older men claiming that its performance requires too much effort.

Pl. 30H illustrates the dance of the skinny fish, *Pipinjawari*, who injured his spine while taking part in a spear-throwing contest held during the final *pukamuni* rituals of *Purukupali*. The dancer is miming the pain that *Pipinjawari* suffered on account of his injury.

Pl. 30J is an attractive and graceful dance symbolizing the sea-eagle, *Jirakui*, swooping down on its prey, with its wings outspread. This dance was performed many times at the *ilanias* of the woman, *Nulatini*.

Pl. 30K, the *Ningaui* dance, symbolizes the awkward gait and curious actions of these dwarf spirit people who live in the swamps of south-western Bathurst Island. This dance was performed with considerable skill and artistry by the leader of the Bathurst Island group, *Jibunglialumi*, at one of the *ilanias* of *Waniamperi*.

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## 8. THE CEREMONIAL OBJECTS OF THE TIWI

The ceremonial objects of the *pukamuni* ceremony, like the carved and painted burial poles and elaborate facial and body decorations already described, are totally unlike those used by the mainland aborigines. 301 778 765 [171]

A series of objects obtained on the 1954 expedition is illustrated on Pls. 31, 32.[94]

On Pl. 31, A, D, and G, are chest ornaments called *pukabinda*, which are suspended around the neck with a loop of human hair string. Fig. A is an oval ball of the soft wax of the native bee, into which has been pressed a large number of the red and black seeds of a jungle vine. Fig. D, made of several ovals of lawyer vine, is bound together with strips of the same material. The pendant is made of human hair and white cockatoo feathers. The oval opening is too small to pass over the head, therefore this ornament, and similar examples which I saw, were suspended around the neck with string. Fig. G is a flat disc like Fig. D, with lengths of lawyer vine bound together. This disc was coated with wax, and further decorated with red and black jungle seeds. [237]

Pl. 31E and F are ornaments, *palmatjinas*, decorated with red and black seeds, which are pushed up the arm over the elbow.[95] Both have been made in the same manner as Fig. D, G.

Pl. 31B is a goose-feather ball, *tokwianga*, worn around the neck or tied around the upper arm. *Wurarbuti* (frontispiece) is wearing a *tokwianga*.

These ornaments are made by embedding ends of the downy feathers of the pied goose in a ball of wax. So much work was entailed in making a *tokwianga* that the aborigines were loth to part with them. The *tokwianga* is worn on all ceremonial occasions. [237]

Pl. 31C is a false beard, *baludi*, which was worn at the *ilanias*, the final *pukamuni* (see frontispiece), and the *kulama* rituals. The *baludi* may be pure decoration, or it may replace the beard, which up until comparatively recently was plucked out at both the *pukamuni* and *kulama* rituals. [302]

Fig. H illustrates three cane arm rings, *jairinis*, made from plaited lawyer vine. These were worn on the upper and lower arms of the *pukamuni* men and women, and occasionally by other performers, as decoration. At the end of the burial ceremony the performers take these rings from their arms and leave them on the grave as a present for the spirit of the dead.

[94] Spencer, 1928, Pl. XII, Figs. 450–4, illustrates a number of *pukamuni* ornaments he collected in 1911.

[95] Several of the men illustrated on Pl. 26B, are wearing these arm ornaments.

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765 778 Pl. 32 illustrates a number of objects used in the *pukamuni* and *kulama* rituals.

[411] [531] Pl. 32A, B, are two of the beautifully carved ceremonial spears known respectively as the male *pukamuni* spear, *tunkaringa*, and the female spear, *tunkagumi*. These are made purely as a gift to the dead, they appear to have no other function.

[114] [322] [412] At the time of Spencer's visit to Melville Island during 1911, the aborigines told him that these spears were cut with cockle shells. During 1920 a Melville Island man in Darwin gave me the same information, adding that the making of a double-sided female spear, 32B, with shell tools occupied an old man about three months, and the single-sided male spear, 32A, about two.

Pl. 32C is the forked throwing stick, *mikuanta*, with which *Tjapara*, the moon-man injured *Purukupali*, and 32D, the plain throwing stick, *muruguna*. These are used in the *kulama* and *pukamuni* rituals, as well as for hunting and in personal quarrels.

[302] [413] Pl. 32E, G, are two interesting tools called *portas*, used for printing lines of dots on the bodies of the men and women. The colour is crushed to a thin paste, spread on a flat rock, and the *porta* rocked backward and forward in the paint to load the *porta*. The *porta* is then rocked on the body printing a line of dots.[96]

[515] [413] Pl. 32F is a curious ceremonial scratching stick used by the *Kilipaniati kulama* initiate to scratch himself during the period when he is not allowed to do so with his hands.

Pl. 32H, J, are two burial poles, *tudinis*, which were erected on the grave. These will be described in Section 10.

## 9. THE MESSAGE STICKS

202 765 Message sticks, under the general name of *purunkina*, are used by the Tiwi for several purposes; personal requests to fellow tribesmen asking for presents or supplies (Fig. 5E); invitations to other groups to perform ceremonies (Fig. 5F, G, H), and in association with the *pukamuni* rituals.

When the ceremonial leader appointed the "workers" to cut the poles (p. 74), he also sent messengers carrying specially carved sticks (*purunkinas*) to each totemic group on Melville and Bathurst Islands, telling them when the final *pukamuni* rituals were about to start.

[301] [302] As each messenger neared his destination he painted himself entirely in white and donned his goose-feather ball, *tokwianga*, his chest ornaments,

[96] The lines of dots on *Wurarkuti* (frontispiece) were made with a *porta*.

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202 765 *palmajinis*, and cane armlets, *jairinis*. Then, taking a female *pukamuni* spear, *tunkaguni*, in his hand he seated himself within sight of the camp.

[301] [302] The local aborigines went out to welcome him, but on seeing the message stick and hearing the news, they mourned hysterically, cutting their heads [785] and beating themselves with sticks.

When the mourning died down, the aborigines gave the messenger a meal, [574] after which he returned to his own camp.

[126] [184] [794] Although the general distribution of the totemic *purunkitas* has been discontinued in recent years, the aborigines who knew them well, made nine examples for me. It would seem that each totemic place had its own particular design, for when I showed the *purunkita* (Fig. 7D) to old *Tjamalampua* and *Malumerinita*, neither of whom had seen it previously, they recognized it immediately as a message stick which would have been sent to the *Mudungkala* totemic group of Buchanan Island, at the southern entrance to Apsley Straits. However, other *purunkitas*, i.e. (Fig. 5C; Fig. 5F, G, H; and Fig. 6A, E) are still being used in the *pukamuni* rituals.

During the early days of our stay, when the *ilanias* of *Waniamperi's pukamuni* were about to start, three men, two of them, *Marawani* and *Uramatjina*, being the chief mourners, made a journey to the Bathurst Island people for the purpose of giving them a *purunkita* and telling them the news.

A few days later a Bathurst Island man returned with the message stick, Fig. 5F, G, H, and verbal instructions relating to the forthcoming burial rituals.

[126] Although I did not see the message stick which *Marawani* and his companions carried to Bathurst Island, I was able to make a rubbing of another (Fig. 7C), which was sent to the same locality on the death of *Pulanimbuwi's* wife.

Later, old *Tjamalampua* sent another message stick (Fig. 7A, B), to the men of the *Mudungkala* totem of Buchanan Island, asking for European goods and food to pay the "workers" at the final rituals of *Waniamperi's pukamuni*.

### *Notification of Death*

202 211 ×532 The designs on message stick, Fig. 7C, which an aboriginal carried to the Bathurst Island people, together with the news of the death of *Nulatini*, did not, in any way, refer to the message that accompanied it, but to topographical details along the motor road between Snake Bay and Cockle Point on Apsley Straits.

The upper section, *d*, is the aboriginal camp at Snake Bay, and the indentations, *a*, *a*, are the rocks on its shores. The cross-hatched rectangle in the

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tobacco, *b*, matches, *c*, a pipe, *d*, a calico loin cloth, *e*, a pair of short trousers, *f*, a shirt, *g*, sugar, *h*, tea, and *j*, flour.

*Secular*

Fig. 60 is a carved stick whose designs were thought out by the artist as he walked along the sandy beach near our camp. Although not a message stick, the illustration is included in the section as an example of how an aboriginal expresses his mental images through the medium of simple wood carving.

The horizontal lines, *a*, *a*, symbolize the waves breaking on the beach, and the groups of short lines, a pattern of shallow gutters which had been formed on the sandy shore by the fresh water seeping from a nearby lagoon.

## 10. THE BURIAL POLES

The painted and decorated poles of Melville and Bathurst Islands attracted the attention of all the early visitors. Sir Gordon Bremer in 1824, possibly the first European to see the *pukamuni* poles, when writing about a grave he saw on Melville Island, states: "The situation was one of such perfect retirement and repose that it displayed considerable feeling in the survivors who placed it there and the simple order which pervaded the spot would not have disgraced a civilised people. It was an oblong square open at the foot, the remaining end and sides being railed around with trees, 7 feet to 8 feet high, some of which were carved with stone or shell and further ornamented by rings of wood. On the tops of these were placed the waddies (throwing sticks) of the deceased. The grave was raised above the level of the earth, but the raised part was not more than 3 feet long. At the head was placed a piece of a canoe (probably a bark basket) and a spear and round the grave were several little baskets made of the fan-palm leaf, which, from their small size, we thought had been placed there by the children of the departed. Nothing could exceed the neatness of the whole; the sand and earth were cleared away from the sides and not a shrub or weed was suffered to grow within the area."[88]

I have quoted Sir Gordon Bremer's description in full because it shows that, even after a hundred and thirty years, the aborigines of Melville Island,

[88] Bremer, 1843. From this description it would appear that Bremer chanced to see a grave not long after the aborigines had completed the final rituals. Had any time elapsed the whole area would have been covered with grass and leaves, for, after the *pukamuni* ceremonies, nobody is interested in either the grave or the poles.

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765 where they have not suffered from ecclesiastic prohibitions, are still using a
[178] similar form of grave and posts.

Major Campbell (1834, p. 158), writing of a grave he saw on Melville Island in 1826, states: "It (the grave) is surrounded by upright poles, many of which are formed at the top like lances and halberts, 14–15 feet high, and between these the spears and waddies (probably of the deceased) are stuck upright in the ground."

Brown (1905, p. 28) found a grave on Luxmore Head, in Apsley Straits surrounded . . . "by wooden slabs, portions of which had been burnt. Aboriginal markings were faintly discernible in places on the wood, some of the posts had the wood cut away from the outside toward the centre, leaving a short spike standing up in the middle of the post."

Klaatsch (1907, p. 257), in referring to the same burial poles at Luxmore Head, writes: "In some examples the slab was so carved that the upper part was only connected with the lower by two thin pillars or, on others, the top was mushroom-shaped.

"It is easy to see that the aborigines used fire for this work of sculpture, scratching the burnt part away with shell."

Basedow,[99] in 1911, came across a grave of an infant, on Bathurst Island, surrounded by five simply decorated posts, which had "been cut and carved with a sharp bladed instrument, in all probability a tomahawk."

Basedow persuaded the aborigines to renovate the designs, which did not vary greatly from those in use at the present day.

[114] Spencer,[100] in 1911, made sketches of many of the burial poles, and arranged
for the aborigines to redecorate a group which was later displayed in the
[177] National Museum, Melbourne. He states (1928, p. 682) that: "It (the pole) was slowly and laboriously cut with an iron tomahawk, but formerly with a sharp shell, until it has the form decided upon by the artificer."

Dr. Kenneth Fry, who visited Melville Island in 1913, was the first investigator to ascertain the meanings of a number of poles. These, with his permission, are illustrated on Fig. 8. All of these shapes, but two, are those still most commonly used among the hundred or more which I saw on Melville Island.

[115] An old aboriginal, *Tjamalampua*, told me that in *palaneri* times, i.e., a long while ago, before there were any steel axes, the aborigines used stone axes to fell the hollow trees for *pukamuni* poles. Although there were just as many poles around the grave as there are today, they were neither as

[99] Basedow (1913), p. 314, Fig. 4, Pls. 13, 14, 16, 17, 18.
[100] Spencer (1928), p. 682, Figs. 471–7, Pl. X.

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elaborately shaped nor decorated, often being covered with no more than a series of dots.[1]

FIG. 8. *The Burial Poles*

### *Origin of the Pukamuni Poles*

At present we have no evidence to show whether the custom of erecting burial poles around the grave in such numbers, not as a memorial, but as a gift to the dead, is confined entirely to the Tiwi tribe, or whether it is used in any other part of the world, and has reached the Tiwi by diffusion. There certainly are no similar burial poles on the Australian continent.

In north-eastern Arnhem Land, some of the decorated log coffins are as high as seven feet.[2] But the function of those coffins bears no relationship to that of the burial poles of Melville Island, the former being no more than coffins to hold the bones, and the latter, gifts to please the spirit of the dead.

It is possible that, during the long period of isolation from the mainland cultures, the Melville Islanders may have changed coffins of north-eastern Arnhem Land into the burial poles of the Tiwi.

The only examples of burial posts outside of Australia known to me, that are in any way comparable in function to those on Melville Island, are the *malanggan* burial ornaments of New Ireland described by Kramer.[3]

### *Methods of Manufacture*

Although, at the conclusion of the *pukamuni* rituals, the grave is totally neglected and the poles allowed to decay, the "workers", using steel axes[4]

[1] Although *Tjamalampua* is not fully correct (see Bremer's and Campbell's statement in the early nineteenth century, pp. 107, 108), it indicates that both the poles and their painted decorations have, with the passing of the years, and the acquisition of steel tools, become more complex.

[2] Mountford, 1956, p. 317. [3] Kramer, 1925.

[4] The evidence of Bremer, Spencer and the aborigines, suggests that before the advent of metal the only cutting tools owned by the aborigines would have been crude stone axes, and the shells of cockles. It is likely that, under these conditions, the poles would

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and the hardest and most durable timber available, spared no pains to make the best poles they could.[6]

When the "workers" had finished shaping the poles they notified the leader of the *pukamuni* ceremony, who then gave the order for the poles to be scorched over a fire of blazing leaves to make a black ground on which to paint the design (Mountford, 1956, p. 427). Then, setting up the poles in a double row near the grave (Mountford, 1956, p. 426), the men began their task of decoration (Pl. 33B, D). At the same time, the ceremonial leader sent message sticks (p. 98) to notify the outlying groups that the final rituals were about to start.

The materials used for decoration were: red and yellow ochres from Imilu, Cape Van Diemen, a white ochre from a beach nearby, crushed charcoal for black, one of three types of fixatives, i.e., the white of turtle eggs, wild honey and beeswax mixed together, and the particularly gelatinous sap of one of the tree orchids.

The ochres were crushed, mixed with water and one or more of the fixatives, and applied to the poles with brushes made from chewed strips of bark or vines (Fig. 2).

As I watched these primitive artists at work, I was impressed with the care they took in the arranging of their simple patterns, and with the obvious pleasure they experienced in their work. A quiet air of contentment pervaded the outdoor studio as each of the ten artists made his own pole as beautiful as possible.

Each artist appeared to be certain as to the designs he would use; there was no evidence of copying; in fact, *Pulanimbuwi* showed me the rough draft of the designs of his pole (Pl. 35A, B, Fig. 9), scratched on the back of a cigarette tin, days before he had even felled the tree.

A puzzling aspect of the *pukamuni* poles is the wide variety of the painted designs used, and the almost total absence in those designs of any reference to the myths and totemic localities.[6]

At first sight it would appear that the pole shapes, collected by both Fry and myself, were inventions of the moment. An analysis of the poles have simpler shapes than at the present time, although Campbell (1834, p. 158) speaks about "poles with tops like lances and halberts". The aborigines may have used fire to assist in the shaping of the poles, in fact, this is suggested by Klaatsch (1907, p. 387).

[6] Not far from our camp was the deserted grave of the father of *Muramuju* (Pl. 38D), who died when his son was an infant. *Muramuju* was then over forty years old, yet the poles, although somewhat eroded and disarranged by the elements, are still in a fair state of preservation.

[6] This and old *Tjamalampua's* statement, p. 109, could indicate that the poles and their designs are a recent cultural trait that is not yet fully absorbed into the culture.

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recorded on the expedition, however, indicates that this may not be so, i.e.,

| | |
|---|---|
| Forks or limbs of trees | 26 per cent |
| Breasts of women | 9 per cent |
| Rocks on sea-coast | 18 per cent |
| Windows and doors (openings in poles) | 15 per cent |

That is, four shapes make up 68 per cent and the remaining eleven shapes, 32 per cent.

This would suggest that certain shapes have a traditional meaning, and that these shapes predominate. In fact, an examination of the accounts of the early travellers, Bremer, Campbell, Klaatsch, and Spencer, suggests that, except for those poles in the form of human figures, the *pukamuni* poles have not changed in shape to any extent during the last fifty years or more.

### *Description of the Burial Poles*

#### (a) *The Pukamuni of Waniamperi*

The ten *tudinis* which the "workers" cut and painted for *Waniamperi's pukamuni* were looked upon as a family, a man, his two wives, and their children.

Pl. 32J, a middle-aged man, had two wives; Pl. 34E, a very fat, but young woman, and Pl. 35A, B, her much older sister.

The young wife, Pl. 34E, had three children; Pl. 36A, B, a small boy about ten, Pl. 36D, a girl of twelve, and Pl. 37D, a young married woman without a family.

The older wife, Pl. 35A, B, had four children; Pl. 36F, a boy of five, Pl. 36C, a girl about twelve, Pl. 32H, a young unmarried man, and Pl. 37D, an unmarried woman.

Plate 32J, eighteen feet in height, was by far the tallest pole in the group.

Because the actual shapes of the poles seldom had any relationship to the designs painted on them, the pole shapes and the painted designs will be described separately.

The pole shapes of Pl. 32J are: the projection, *c*, on the top, represents the branch of a tree, the bosses, *a*, *a*, *a*, are the breasts of women, the three cylindrical sections, *m*, *n*, *m*, large rocks on the sea-coast, and the narrow uprights, *n*, *n*, joining them, the limbs of eucalyptus trees.

In the painted designs, *a*, *a*, *a*, are, as before, the breasts of women, and the short vertical lines, *b*, *b*, etc., the teeth of a comb. The painted white projection, *c*, on the top of the pole, is a shovel-nosed shark; the crossed circles, *d*, *d*, are the nose of crocodiles, and the diagonal bands, *e*, *e*, *e*, the

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mangrove creeks in which the crocodiles live. The red, yellow and white bands, *h*, *h*, etc., are boulders of various colours on the beach, and the dotted diamond shapes, on *m*, *m*, *m*, the pattern which the turtle-woman, *Garagalani*, painted on her bark basket at *Purukupali's* ceremony, and which, when she changed herself into a turtle, became the shell design on her carapace (p. 39).

The pole shapes of Pl. 34B are: the projections, *f*, the fork of a tree, the bosses, *a*, *a*, breasts of women and the three cylindrical sections, rocks on the sea-coast.

The painted designs at *a*, *a*, are, as before, women's breasts, and the radiating designs and central dot on the bosses, the eyes of women. The vertical bands, such as *d*, etc., on the two upper cylindrical sections, and the horizontal bands, *e*, etc., on the lower section, are women's trade belts, the discs on the upper and lower sections, silver coins, and the dots on the background, stars in the sky.

The pole shapes of Pl. 35A, B, are: the two forked projections, *a*, *a*, the throwing sticks used by the moon-man, *Tjapara*, in his fight against *Purukupali*; the rectangular opening immediately below, is a window, and the lower section, a large boulder.

The painted decorations on the pole (Pl. 35A, B), are, by far, the most elaborate and best executed I have examined. On the upper section, the diagonal and transverse red and white lines, *b*, symbolise the native roads near Imilu, north-western Melville Island, the source of the red ochre so valued by the Melville Islanders; the cone-shaped figures, *d*, outcrops of red and white rocks, and the bands, *c*, *c*, grass on the top of the cliffs at Imilu.

The many designs on the lower section illustrate, in detail, the topography at Imilu. On Fig. 9, the key to Pl. 35A, B, these designs are arranged in topographical levels.[1]

Level 1, pictures the highlands; 2, the jungle at the top of the cliffs; 3, an aboriginal road; 4, the trees on the sea-coast; 5, the surface of the sea; 6, the creatures in the sea, and 7, the waves breaking on the sea-shore.

On level 1, *g*, *g*, *g*, represent the eucalypts of the highlands and on level 2, *j*, *j*, etc., the jungle trees which grow along the edge of the cliff. At *y*, is a

[133]

[1] Brown (1905, p. 28), writing about the appearance of these cliffs, when viewed from the sea, states, "... they often appear thus: four parallel lines—top of timber, top of cliff, top of beach, edge of water; the first, green, the second, red, the third, white, greyish-blue water in front and blue sky above." Brown and *Pulanimkuwi*, the artist of the pole, were both impressed with the same parallel lines of colour, which extend for miles along the shore of Cape Van Diemen.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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winding track leading from the beach, up the cliffs, to Imilu. Another road, at level 3, along the top of the cliff, is indicated by the horizontal barred design, *k*, *k*.

Level 4 pictures the sea beach, *h*, *h*, etc., being casuarina trees, and, *s*, an especially large eucalypt.

FIG. 9. *Carved and Painted Burial Pole*

There is a billabong at *b*, with trees (radiating designs) on its banks, and the pit, *v*, at Imilu, surrounded by trees, from which the aborigines dig their ochres.[1]

On the surface of the water (level 5), *c*, *c*, are canoes, and *e*, *e*, turtles.

A series of panels, 8–15, on level 6, picture the creatures that live in the deep water. The designs *h*, *h*, etc., indicate large sponges on the rocks; *a*, *a*,

[1] This ochre, yellow when dug out of the ground, changes to red when heated in the camp fire.

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etc., old and young crocodiles; *e*, *e*, etc., turtles; *f*, *f*, etc., octopi, and *d*, *d*, etc., crabs. Panel 17 is a creek in the mangrove swamps, in which the aborigines anchor their canoes, *c*, *c*, etc. In this creek are octopi, *f*, *f*, etc.

Panels 16–26 illustrate the sea-shore and the waves. The series of vertical parallel lines in each panel are the incoming lines of waves; the ovals, such as *k*, are the shells on the sandy bottom, and the curving panels, similar to *m*, the waves breaking on the beach.

The pole shapes of Pl. 37F, which the aborigines looked upon as a young woman, are: *a*, her hat; *b*, her neck, and *s*, her ribs. Sections *c*, *c*, *c*, are large rocks on the sea-shore.

The meaning of the designs painted on the same pole are: the chevrons on the top of the pole at *a* are spider webs in the jungle; the bands, *b*, rocks of different colours on the beach; diamonds on *c*, *c*, *c*, *c*, the check designs on the printed calico of the young woman's skirt; *d*, *d*, *d*, her belts of different colours, and *e*, is the coloured cloth she used as a head band.

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In general, the pole shapes of Pl. 32H, represent a tree. The projections, *g*, are the branches; the two upper cylindrical sections, *m*, *m*, the boles; the opening, *h*, is a hollow and the lower sections, the trunk.

The painted designs in the rectangles covering the pole each have similar meanings. The intersecting diagonal lines (see inset), *c*, *c*, *c*, *c*, symbolize the pattern on the back, and the groups of vertical parallel lines, *a*, *a*, those on the side of a reef fish, called *pranaia*. The long white lines, *e*, *e*, are stripes, and *d*, *d*, *d*, *d*, dots on the bodies of the *Maludaianini* caterpillars which later were transformed into the men of the Milky Way. The dotted triangles, *b*, *b*, represent the shell pattern on the back of the hawkbill turtle, *Garagalani*.

In the pole shapes of Pl. 36C, the upper projection, *a*, is a cycad palm; *c*, *c*, are the breasts of women, and *e*, *e*, *e*, edible yams.

The painted rectangles on sections *d* and *f* refer, almost exclusively, to different kinds of food, although some common objects, such as throwing sticks, baskets and spears are represented. I did not find out the meanings of the designs on the lowest section.

The pole shapes, illustrated on Pl. 36A, B, are: *a*, the bow of a wooden canoe, and the oval designs at *c*, the paint on its sides.

On section *b*, of Pl. 36A, the painted diamond pattern *g*, is the body of a goanna, the triangle, *h*, its tail, and the dots are its eggs.

The intersecting lines on the other side of the same section (Pl. 36B), symbolize the ribs of a goanna, and the cross-hatched diamonds, the marks on its skin.

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The designs on sections *d* and *f* also relate to the goanna. The small white discs on *d* are goanna holes; the cross-hatched diamonds, its skin patterns, and the dots, its eggs. The triangles on *f* are the ribs, and the dots, the fat of the same creature. White and red bands on *e*, symbolise waves breaking on the beach.

The shapes of Pl. 36D are: *a* is white cloud; the rectangular opening *e*, a door, and the thinner section *f*, a post of a house. Section *d* is a large boulder, and *g*, *h*, the trunks of a fan palm.

The painted, cross-hatched bands, *b*, on section *e*, indicate goanna fat; the alternate bands, *c*, *c*, etc., are rocks on the shore, and the central white disc on *d* is the light from an electric torch. The vertical lines radiating from this disc are aboriginal paths; the horizontal bands are adjacent mangrove creeks, and the cross-hatched rectangles, discarded fish-bones on its banks.

The circles at *g* are rocks in the sea, and the white lines represent rope used for catching turtles. The dots on the background symbolize turtle eggs in the sand. The vertical bands on *h* are mangrove creeks, and the cross-hatched areas, body scars on the backs and arms of old men and women.[9]

The two projections at *a* on Pl. 36F, are the front flippers of a turtle, the opening, *c*, is a window, and *d*, a door. The lower section is a European house.

The cross-hatching at *e*, *e*, represents the marks on the handles of throwing sticks (Pl. 32D); the transverse bands, *f*, and the vertical bands, *g*, *g*, aboriginal tracks in the forest, and the dots, stars in the sky.

The upper projections at *a* (Pl. 37D), are the branches of trees, the rectangular opening below is a doorway, the two cylindrical sections, *h*, *h*, are rocks on the coast, and the design, *j*, is a stingray.

The painted designs refer almost exclusively to the decorations used at a *pukamuni* ceremony. The chevron bands at *b* and *c* on the upper projections, *a*, are coloured cane, and plain, feathered *pukamuni* arm ornaments respectively (Pl. 31E, F). Painted designs at *f*, *f*, are arm ornaments similar to those at *b*, *c*. The plain band, *g*, however, represents chest ornaments (Pl. 31D, G). The circles at *d*, *d*, are *pukamuni* cane armlets, and the cross-hatched rectangles and panels *h*, *h*, *h*, the chevron body scars of the performers.

### (*b*) *The Pukamuni of Makapini*

As in the *pukamuni* ceremony of *Waniamperi*, the poles of *Makapini* were looked upon as a family; Pl. 34B, the mother; Pl. 34A, an adolescent daughter,

[9] Until recently, both men and women were decorated with elaborate series of chevron scars on the arms, legs and back (Pl. 29A). This practice has been discontinued.

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and Pl. 34F, a small son. As before, the shape of the pole had one set of meanings, and the designs painted on them another.

The two projections, *a*, on Pl. 34B, represent the fork, and the central white section, *d*, is the bole of a eucalyptus tree. The sections above and below *d*, are large rocks on the beach.

The central transverse painted bands, *b*, *b*, are women's leather trade belts, the vertical panels, *c*, etc., in the upper section, crocodile's intestines, and the cross-hatched panels, *g*, etc., crocodile's backbone. On the lower section, *f*, etc., are turtle intestines, and the cross-hatched panels, *e*, etc., chevron body scars.

The significance of the shapes of Pl. 34A, reading from the top are: the white top, *k*, a European hat; *s*, its rim; the openings, *c*, *c*, windows, and *p*, *r*, tree trunks.

The white vertical panels, *a*, indicate a turtle's vertebrae, and the adjacent cross-hatched panels, *b*, its intestines. White bands, *e*, *e*, are *pukamuni* cane arm ornaments (*jairinis*, Pl. 31H), and cross-hatched bands, *d*, *d*, chevron body scars.

[291] Transverse band *f*, is a leather belt; panels, *h*, are turtle's intestines; cross-hatched areas, *g*, etc., body scars. On *r*, the lowest section, band *m*, is a leather trade belt; the vertical panels, *o*, are turtle intestines, and the cross-hatched panels, *n*, body scars.

The four projections, *a* (Pl. 34F), are branches of trees; *g*, is a hill; *h*, an edible yam, and *j*, a large rock on the coast.

The long white rectangles, *b*, etc., are small freshwater creeks, and the diagonal marks on *c*, body scars; yellow band *d*, is a male *Maratji* (p. 154). The chevron panels, *e*, etc., are female *Maratjis*, and the white rectangles, *f*, etc., thunderclouds associated with this dangerous mythical creature.

The meanings of the painted designs on 37C are: sections *a*, *a*, arm ornaments, *palmatjinas* (Pl. 31E, F), and *b*, the false beard, *baludi*, made of goose feathers (Pl. 31C), both of which are worn at the *pukamuni* ceremonies. Designs *c* and *d*, symbolize a stingray, *paluwadju*, and *e*, its body markings.

(*c*) *Miscellaneous*

Pl. 34C, D, pictures the crocodile-man, *Jirakupai*, who once lived in a lagoon near Cape Fourcroy (myth, p. 27).

The forearms of the crocodile are at *a*, the V-shaped design, *b*, representing its lower jaw. The head is at *c*, the chest at *d*, the neck at *e*, the nose (crossed lines) at *f*, the spinal crest at *g*, and the scale pattern on its back at *h*, *h*.

On Pl. 37B the upper projections *a*, *a*, symbolize the limbs of a tree. The

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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diagonal lines, *b*, indicate the sandbanks in the bay at the front of our camp, and the dots, *c*, on the triangles, the oysters on the rocks.

The opening, *e*, is a window; *d*, *d*, are the legs of an aboriginal man, and the bosses, *f*, *f*, etc., breasts of women. Diagonal coloured lines, such as *g*, etc., are the vines of an edible yam, and the dotted diamond shapes, *h*, etc., the spider webs on their leaves.

The shapes and painted designs on Pl. 37B all refer to the topography near the expedition camp.

The projection, *a*, represents the trunk of a eucalyptus tree, the bosses, *b*, *e*, *e*, and *e*, *e*, symbolize boulders on the sea-beach; the horizontal lines, *c*, *c*, etc., the sandbars in the bay; the long vertical panels, *g*, *g*, etc., the open beach; the bands of short vertical lines at *d*, *d*, *d*, the lines of waves breaking on that beach, and the cross-hatched rectangles, such as *f*, *f*, etc., the seaweed floating on the surface of the water.

The painted projections, *a*, *a*, on Pl. 37A again represent the fork of a tree, and the opening, *h*, is a window. The bosses, *b*, *b*, are the breasts of women, the painted circle *c*, with the intersecting lines, symbolizing the nipple.

The central line, *d*, is a freshwater creek which ran into the sea about 200 yards from our camp, while the parallel chevrons, *e*, etc., indicate the lines made by the water of a nearby lagoon as it seeps through the sand and runs down the beach into the sea (see carved stick, Fig. 6D).

The boss, *f*, is an adjacent rocky point, the grooved arms, *g*, *g*, refer to Karslake Island, and the painted design, *m*, to the sandy beach on that island. Diagonal lines, *j*, are the roots of a jungle tree, *pintoma*, and the crossed circles, *k*, its fruit.

The symbolism on the pole, Pl. 36E, deals with the sea and the swamps at a mangrove creek, Tungaduna, which was about two miles north-west of our camp.

The dark-coloured designs, *a*, indicate the open sea, and the white spaces, *d*, the salt water in the mangrove creek. The symbols, *b*, *b*, etc., show the tide marks on the banks of the mangrove creek; *c*, *c*, the sand, and *e*, the mud on its bottom. The dots on semi-circle *f*, are coloured mud crabs; the lines *g*, sandbars in Snake Bay, and the triangles, at *k*, as well as *h*, and *j*, the tide lines on the sandy beach. At *s*, is a black stingray which lives among the rocks; *m* is another stingray (unidentified) which frequents the shallow water, and the cone-shaped design, *q*, is a flat-head fish.

The larger circles, *n*, etc., on the lower section are the cockles, the shells of which the aborigines use as cutting tools; the smaller circles, *o*, mussels, *wurukiti*, and the dots, *p*, the soldier crabs on the beach.

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Dr. Kenneth Fry, when visiting the islands during 1913, made sketches of the pole shapes of eight *tudinis* and found out the meanings of five of them. These are reproduced on Fig. 8.

Fig. 8A represents a man carrying a roll of blankets on his back, *a*, being his hat, and *b*, his blankets. Fig. 8B also represents a man, *a*, as before, indicating his hat. On Fig. 8C, *a*, is the mast of a boat; on Fig. 8D, *a*, is the crutch in the boom of a pearling lugger (usually called branches of trees in the 1954 series); and on Fig. 8G, *a* is a window.

Dr. Fry did not find out the meanings of Fig. 8E, F, and H.

The present-day meaning of design, Fig. 8F, which could have applied to Dr. Fry's example, is somewhat interesting. The aborigines at the Bathurst Island mission are warned of the terrors of their future life if they are not buried "under the cross", i.e., in the mission cemetery.

When I asked the aborigines at Melville Island what was the significance of the cross they had carved on the top of several of their *pukamuni* poles, they explained that it was there purely as a "safety measure", just in case there was something in the mission story.

## 11. THE CARVED AND PAINTED FIGURES

It has been known, for about twenty years, that aboriginal craftsmen, in widely separated places in Northern Australia, but particularly in north-eastern Arnhem Land, have made carved and painted figures in wood.[10] It was a surprise, however, to find that the Tiwi people, who appear to have been separated from the mainland cultures for a considerable time, were using similar figures in their burial rituals.

Inquiries revealed that, for some years, one or another of the aboriginal craftsmen, skilled in the carving of *pukamuni* poles with steel tools, and, no doubt, experimenting with new shapes, occasionally made a burial pole in the form of a conventionalized human body (Pl. 39), or smaller human figures (Pls. 40, 41), which were placed on the grave.

I gathered information about three old human-headed burial poles as well as adding to the expedition collection, two recently made poles and six smaller figures.

At the burial, about thirty years ago, of the mother of one of my informants, a "worker", called *Kado*, made and erected a human-headed burial pole. In 1941, Mr. W. E. Harney saw a well-carved head on a burial

[10] Mountford, 1956, p. 415, traces the distribution of the carved wooden figures in Northern Australia and their development at Yirrkalla, from simple human-headed burial posts of Malay origin to carved heads and full-length figures of considerable merit.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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pole at Punata on Apsley Straits (Fig. 1), while I saw and photographed the third example in the form of a highly conventionalized human figure (Pl. 38A, B, C), which was on an old grave not far from our camp. No doubt there are other examples of these poles on the deserted graves of the Islands. I saw recently, in the Musée Ethnographique et Musée Suisse de Folklore, Bâle, Switzerland, two full-length human figures which had been collected at Bathurst Island by Mr. Karel Kupta in 1956.

This evidence indicates that, for thirty years, at least, the men and women of the Tiwi,[11] occasionally carved burial poles in human form; we do not know when the practice of carving the smaller figures[12] began.

At first sight it appeared that these wooden figures might have been a cultural trait borrowed, as in north-eastern Arnhem Land, from the Malay trepangers. Further research, however, did not confirm this hypothesis.

Although now and again some Malay prau, driven off its course by contrary winds, must have touched the shores of either Melville or Bathurst Island, it is certain that the men of the Tiwi, who were notably unfriendly, would have endeavoured to drive them away. This unfriendliness probably explains why the Malays were not able to establish themselves on these Islands as they did in north-eastern Arnhem Land. The old men of the Tiwi do not remember any Malay fishermen visiting their country. This evidence that the Malays did not settle on the land of the Tiwi is further supported by Campbell (1834), who writes (p. 143), "The Malays were never seen near Melville Island", and later (p. 155), ". . . Malay fishermen were forbidden to go near Melville Island . . . alleging that it was infested with pirates. . . ."

This evidence suggests that the Tiwi practice of carving human figures in wood was not, like that of the aborigines of Arnhem Land, borrowed from a Malayan source, but is a recent local development, probably stimulated by the acquisition of steel tools and the other possessions of the white man. For instance, it would be easy to imagine a skilled aboriginal trying to make his pole resemble the tall bodies of the white man's saints in the mission church. From these larger would develop the smaller figures.

It is unlikely that any elaborately carved burial pole, much less one in the form of a human figure, would be more than fifty years old. Before that time, except those stolen from the short-lived Fort Dundas settlement, the Tiwi would have owned few, if any steel tools.

Although the Tiwi have no specific myth about the larger burial poles,

[11] A woman may cut a burial pole instead of her husband, should he be absent.

[12] There is a difference, however, between the two; the *tudini* poles, in human form, are cut from the hardest and most durable eucalypt; the smaller figures from the soft wood of the beach kapok, a wood which is quickly destroyed by insects.

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they do have one which explains, to their satisfaction, the origin of the small figures.[15]

On the occasion of the first *pukamuni* at Tapararimi, a man, *Piamasilidjara*, who later become the tawny frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*), made and painted a small figure, similar to Pl. 40c, *r*. This he placed on the grave to impersonate *Purukupali*, whose body was not buried there, he having walked into the sea and drowned himself.

At present these human figures, both large and small, are made, either at the request of the chief mourner, or by the "worker" himself. This happens if the man cutting the pole, holding the dead person in especial esteem, wishes to please his spirit. The smaller figures may represent either a son of the dead or mythical men and women of creation times.

When the burial poles are being erected, one of them, in human form, or a smaller figure, is occasionally placed at the head of the grave.[16] The *mopaditi*, on leaving its body, sees the wooden figure, and thinking it is either its son, or one of its old companions, stays at the grave and talks to it about old times. These wooden figures have no *imunka* (life essence), nevertheless the *mopaditi*, who is believed to be stupid and easily misled, thinks it is talking to a living person.

I collected two burial poles (Pl. 39) in the form of highly conventionalized human beings, and six smaller, full-length figures (Pl. 40, 41). I also photographed a pole, in human form, on an old grave (Pl. 38A, B, C).

Pl. 39A, B, C, is a *pukamuni* pole representing a performer, ready to take part in the final burial rituals. The projection *m* (39B), is his hair; *n*, *n*, are his ears, and *o*, *o*, his arms; *p* is a *tokwianga* (goose-feather ball), and *s*, (39A), his backbone.

The cross-hatched squares, *a*, *a*, *a* (39A), represent patches of grass on the floor of the jungle; the designs, *e*, *e*, *e*, jungle trees, and *b*, *b*, *b*, spider webs in the branches.

The waves of the sea are indicated by the bands of short vertical lines, *c*, *c*, *c*; a boulder on the sea-shore by oval *f* (39A); oysters on the rocks by the squares with diagonal lines, *d*, *d*, and paper-bark trees by the groups of intersecting lines at *e*, *e*.

The designs on the face and head (39C) are: *k*, edible fruit, *h*, grass in

[15] This myth does not necessarily indicate great age because those of non-literate people tend to keep up-to-date. Mountford, 1956, p. 98, and Worsley, 1955, p. 856, both give examples of how the Groote Eylandt aborigines have incorporated foreign elements in their creation stories.

[16] This is only one of many safeguards used by the Tiwi to keep the *mopaditi* away from the camp of its old companions, particularly during the first few days after death.

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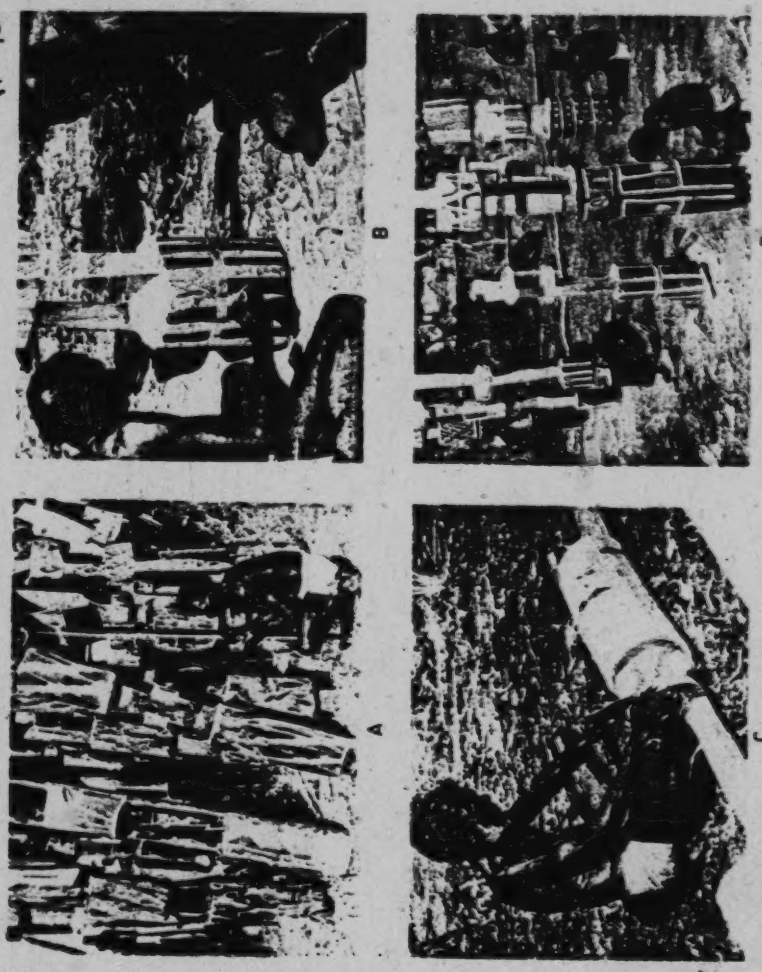


PLATE 33. *Carved and Painted Burial Poles*
A, Poles at Old Grave; B, D, Painting Burial Poles; C, Cutting Burial Pole.

[p. 120 A]

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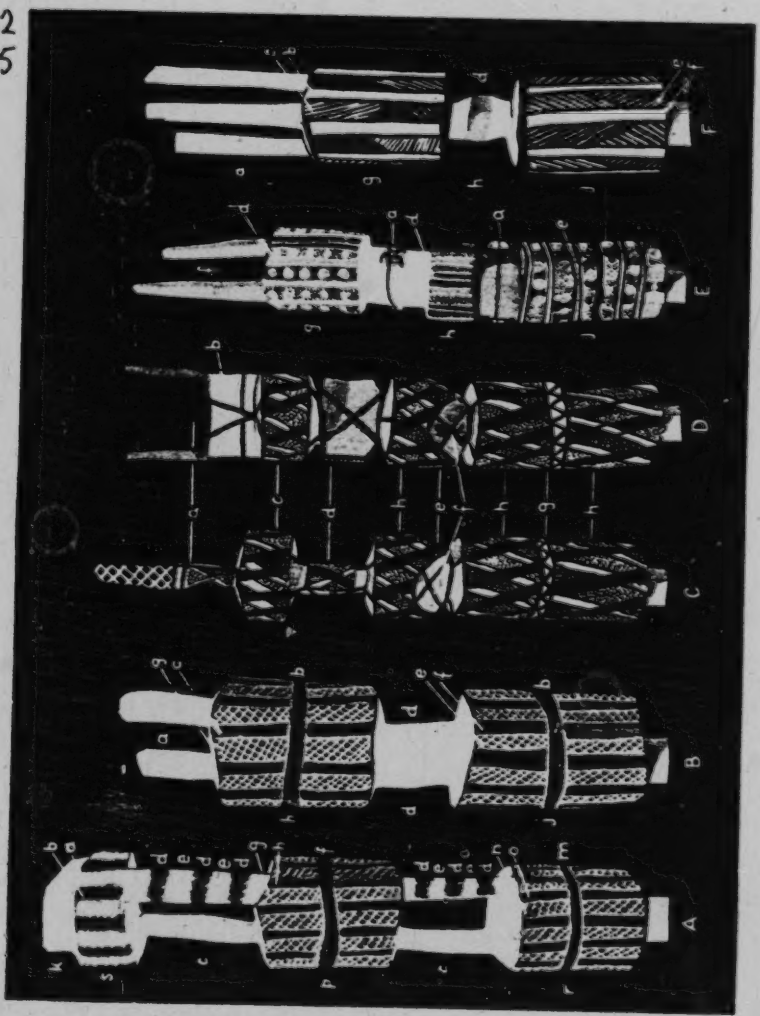

PLATE 34. *Carved and Painted Burial Poles*

[p.12.B]

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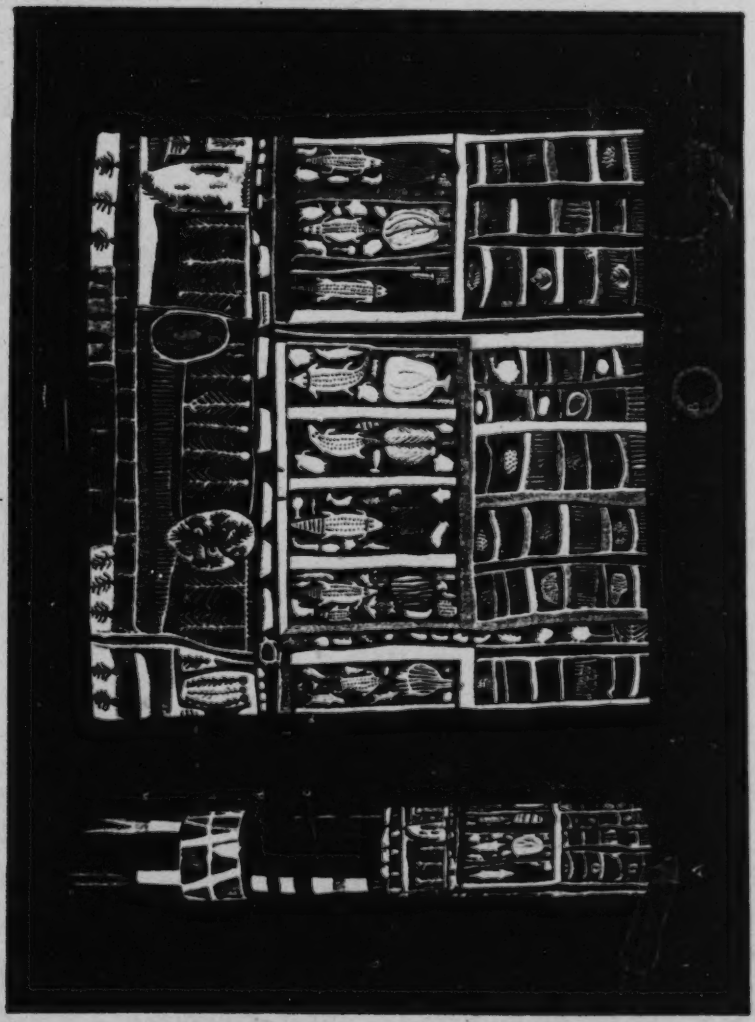

PLATE 51. *Carved and Painted Burial Poles* See also Fig. 9

[p.120 c]

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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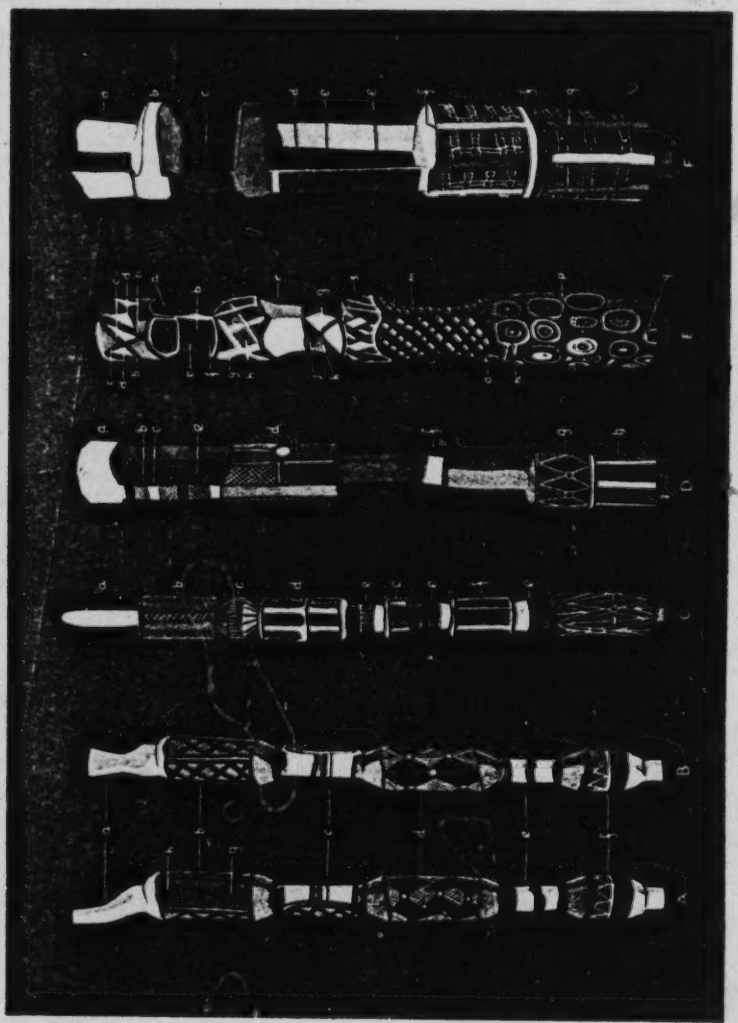

PLATE 36. *Carved and Painted Burial Poles*

[p. 120 D]

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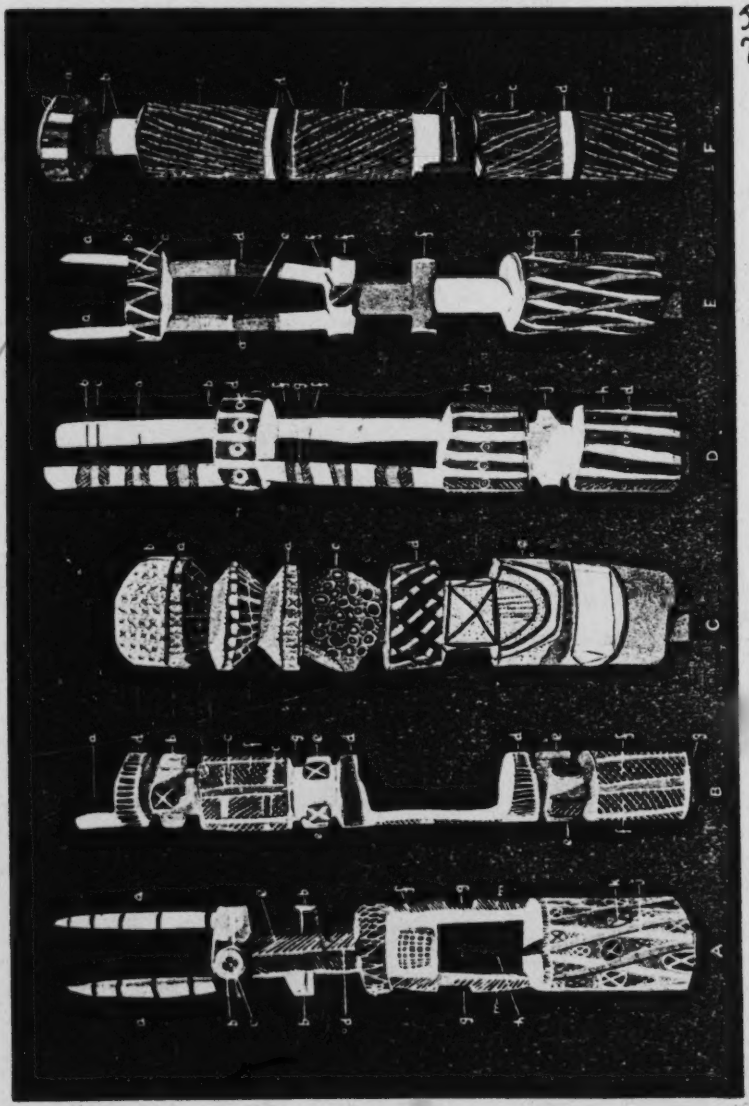


PLATE 37. *Carved and Painted Burial Poles*

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A

B

C

[291]
[142]
[302]
[516]

D

PLATE 38. *Carved and Painted Burial Poles*
A, B, C, Carved and Painted Pole on Old Grave; D, Poles on Old Grave.

[p. 120 F]

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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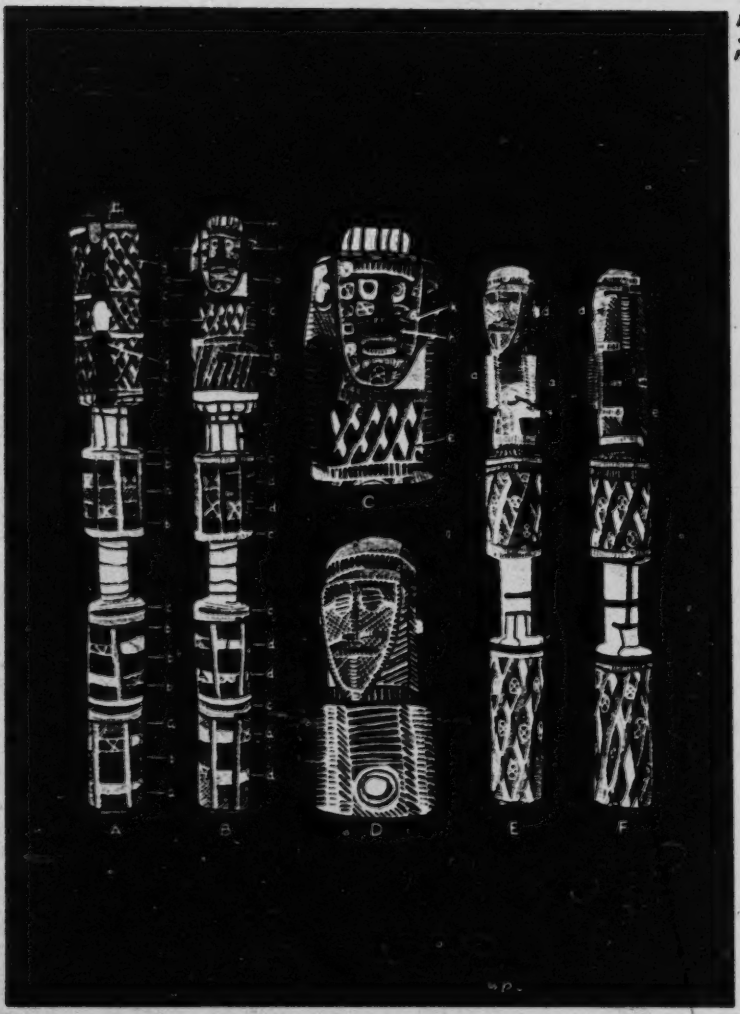


PLATE 39. *Carved and Painted Burial Poles*

[p. 120 G]

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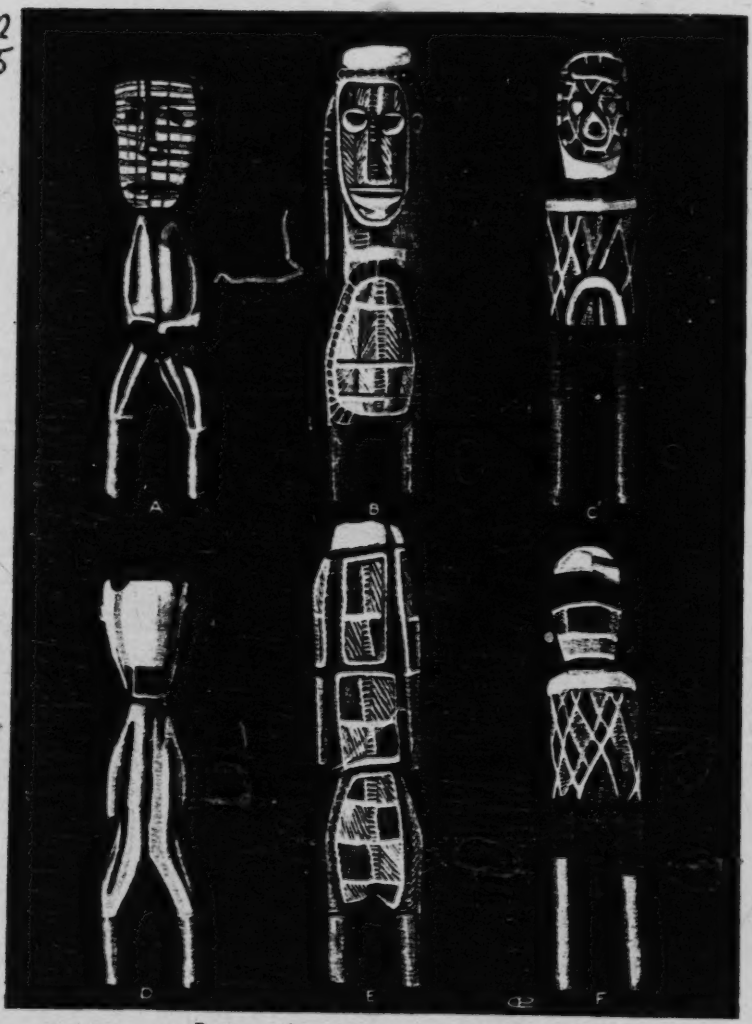


PLATE 40. *Carved and Painted Burial Figures*

[p. 120 H]

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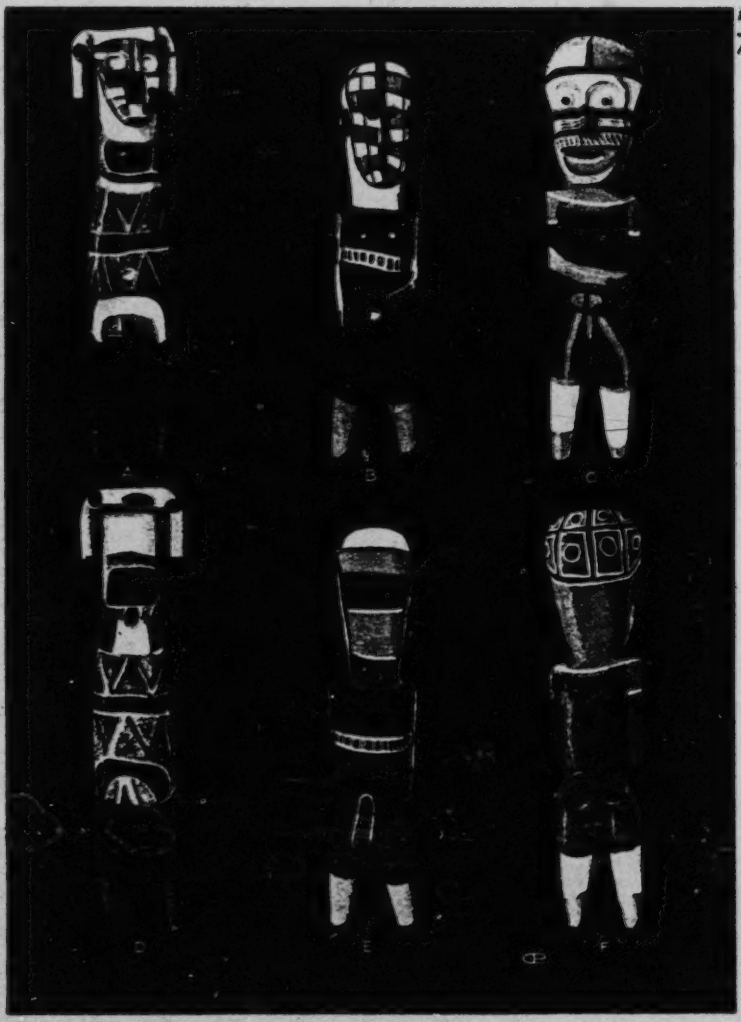

PLATE 41. *Carved and Painted Burial Figures*

[p. 120 I]

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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the forest, and the circles with crossed lines, the scarlet flowers of a eucalyptus tree lying on the ground.

The pole (Pl. 39D, E, F), also represents a man ready to take part in the final *pukamuni* rituals. The few scanty notes that I made at the time state that *a*, *a* (39E) are his arms, and *d*, *d*, his ears. At *f*, is his goose-feather ball, and *e* (39F) his backbone. The facial *pukamuni* decorations are shown on 39D.

Pl. 38A, B, C, are photographs of the pole on an old grave. The pole represents, in a simple way, an aboriginal wearing a hat. The ears are shown as bosses on either side of the face, and the arms, as projections, on either side of the body. The painted eyes and nose, which were not carved into the wood, such as on those illustrated on Pl. 39, can still be faintly seen on Pl. 38a.

Pl. 40A, D, and B, E, are two small full-length figures carved to represent the children of a dead man. To keep him company, these would be placed on the top of his burial poles.

Pl. 40C, F, is supposed to be a duplicate of the wooden figure carved by *Pianatilidjara*, at *Purukupali's* ceremony. The designs on the figure are those which the mythical man painted on his own body.

Pl. 41B, E, is *Purukupali's* son, *Djinini*, who died from the neglect of his mother, *Bima*, and was carried into the sea by his father (myth, p. 30).

Pl. 41C, F, pictures *Purukupali*, his face and body covered with *pukamuni* decorations, carrying his dead son (the transverse band across his abdomen) into the sea.

Pl. 41A, D, represents *Bima*, the wife of *Purukupali*. The designs are those which *Bima* painted on her body when she took part in the *pukamuni* of her husband.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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533 (*e*) "The salt water (sea), brings plenty of drift-wood up on the beach for
539 our fires."
881 (*f*) "The *tudwall* (shark) killed a stingray."
(*g*) "The boat sails fast and the waves are beating its sides."

At approximately 8.30 p.m. the chanting ceased and the aborigines retired to their camps.

### (6) *The Lighting of the Ceremonial Fire*

[137] About 6.30 the next morning, the *Mikinatrininga* women collected pieces of termite mound and put them on the top of the sticks for the fire which had been piled over the oven, the *tumarapi*. This fire could be lit by any man above the grade of *Mikinatrina*. Whilst the fire was burning down, the *Mikingulas* walked around it, and sang a few *kulama* songs, only one of which was recorded.

[177] (*i*) "When I see the shining iron of the new schoolhouse, I think how my children will go to school and wear boots."[81]

881 By 9.30 a.m. after everyone had had a meal, most of the aborigines, including several children, painted themselves in red and made their way to the swamp to take part in the ritual of bringing the *kulama* yams from the water, to the *milimika*.

On reaching the swamp, the leader took the yams from the pad of grass under the water, placed them carefully in the basket, with a bundle of rushes plucked from a nearby swamp on top, then, putting the basket on his shoulder, carried it to the *milimika* and stood it beside the fire "to warm up the yams".

881 The *Mikingulas*, walking anti-clockwise as before, chanted another series
533 of songs.
539 (*a*) "I went to Native Affairs (Darwin), drew out £10 (with which to
[177] gamble) and bought a pack of playing cards."[82]

Striding around the ring with two spears in one hand and a throwing stick in the other, the same man sang.

(*b*) "I have many spears. If the white people were not here, I would kill you all."

881 At the end of the song, the performer called out the name of his dead
765 father, striking himself on the head with his throwing stick to indicate his sorrow. The people on the outside of the ring cried in sympathy.

[185] [81] A parent's hope in a changing society that his children will live at a higher social level that the one which he himself occupies.

[82] A number of the younger Melville Islanders work for extended terms in Darwin, periodically returning to their homeland to take part in the ceremonies.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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After a pause, another aboriginal entered the ring and sang about the previous singer's dead father.

(*e*) "My stomach gets hot like fire,[35] when I think of you, my uncle." Some of the women cried when the song was finished.

(7) *Cooking the Kulama Yam*

When the fire had burnt down to a bed of coals, the men picked up the fragments of burning wood, throwing them in all directions, scraped out the glowing embers with sticks, brushed the ashes from the heated termite mound with boughs, and the oven was ready for cooking the *kulama* yams. Meanwhile, one of the men had bound the rushes into a rope, *imbini*, about an inch in diameter, and sufficiently long to encircle the oven. The fragments of heated termite mound were lightly sprinkled with water, the *imbini* rope coiled around them, the yams carefully arranged on top and the whole covered first with thin sheets of newly split paper-bark, then with sand. Care was taken to cover the yams properly, otherwise, the aborigines explained, *taini*, the *kulama* sickness, would escape and cause blindness to the immediate participants.

As the oven was being covered, the leader patted the sand to consolidate it (Pl. 442), chanting at the same time, "Brr, Brr, Goodbye, Grandmother, goodbye",[36] in the same way as the owl-man, *Purujikini*, did at the first *kulama*.

While the yams were being cooked, the *kulama* people performed the following dances, to the rhythm of sticks beaten by the women.

(*a*) The dance of *jiriwa* (silver-crowned friar-bird).

(*b*) Two crocodiles, *jirakupai*, fighting (Pl. 302), followed by two aborigines as crocodiles crawling in the sand.

(*c*) A crocodile; the dancer carrying the goose-feather ball (*tokwianga*) in his mouth to symbolize the prey of the crocodile.

(*d*) The green turtle with the hands and arms of the dancer moving in imitation of the turtle's flippers.

Two young women, when asked to dance, performed:

(*e*) The crocodile, *jirakupai*,

(*f*) The buffalo,

(*g*) The shark (Pl. 306).

[35] The stomach, or solar-plexus, is the location of the *kwanka* (spirit), and the seat of the emotions.

[36] The *kulama* yam is looked upon as a female when it is dug up, placed beside the *wuringadaia* tree and immersed in the water for the first time. When taken from the swamp it is male, again becoming female from the time it is put in the oven until it is eaten.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
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# CONCLUSION

105 171 THIS study of the Tiwi tribe of Melville and Bathurst Islands, made through the medium of their art, their myths, and their ceremonies, reveals wide differences between many phases of their cultural life and that of the aborigines who live on the adjacent mainland. These differences are probably the result of isolation caused by the dangerous tideways which have separated the two peoples from each other for an unknown, but probably lengthy, period.

[174] Though both are of aboriginal stock, and from the same cultural background (as indicated by basically similar creation stories), this isolation has allowed the two groups to develop independently. It may well be that the beliefs of the Tiwi represent those of one of the aboriginal migrations to Australia, and has remained somewhat constant, while the mainland people, enriched by occasional waves of new ideas, have developed a much more varied philosophical and cultural life.

The main differences between the two cultures can be summarized as follows:

171 532 (a) The art forms of the Melville and Bathurst Islands are so highly formalized that they seldom resemble the objects they represent. In contrast, the art of their neighbours on the mainland, the Arnhem Land aborigines, is not only entirely representational, but is probably a more vital and colourful art than exists in any other part of the continent.

171 765 (b) Compared with the rest of Australia, too, the ceremonies of the Tiwi are particularly limited, there being only two in the whole culture. The major ceremony, that of burial, is by far the more elaborate. It extends over several months, involves the co-operation of many people, and provides the tribe with a complete outlet for their grief, their music, their dancing, and their art. This ceremony is without parallel in Australia, and, so far as we know, elsewhere in the world.

171 881 The other ceremony, the Kulama, is a blending of several rituals: the initiation of men and women into the social grades of the tribe; the ceremony of preparing a poisonous yam for food,[88] which ceremony the participants believe prolongs the wet season; and the airing of grievances

[174] [88] Spencer, 1928, p. 661, speaks of the Kulama as a food increase ritual. It is probable that Spencer was only expressing an opinion, having previously carried out research in Central Australia where increase rituals are both numerous and important. I did not obtain any evidence which indicated that food increase rituals were carried out by the Tiwi.

4: Hart E-5 (1928-1929) 1930 0120 Tiwi 0120



551 render his name tabu. This is the case among the Tiwi. All the names of a dead man become strictly *pukimani* (=tabu) immediately upon his death. Anyone in the tribe who uses a name of a dead person at any time for years after his death but especially in the period—usually about five to six months—that always elapses between the death and the funeral corroboree, violates one of the strictest social sanctions the tribe possesses.
192 And this prohibition extends to all words in the ordinary language—
551 though curiously enough not in the sacred language—which bear any
765 resemblance in sound to any one of the names of the dead man. It applies equally to English names in use by the tribe with resemblances to native or English words and to native words which resemble either English or native words. Thus a boy named *Tipuki* having died "tobacco," "baccy," *Tiparkitimiri* all equally became *pukimani*. Similarly when *Mulaukina*, one of the Mandeimbula horde died, *mulikina*, one of the commonest words in the language, meaning "plenty," "full," "enough," was dropped completely from the language.

551 Nor does the *pukimani* stop here. Not only is the use of any of the
553 names of the dead man prohibited, but there is an equally strong rule against the use of any of the personal names he has bestowed upon other people, be they his own children or the children of others. A young child may only have one name, that given him by his father, but should his father die he must become nameless until he gets a new name from somewhere. This aspect of the *pukimani* does not extend to similar words in either the ordinary or the sacred language. For instance although
[192 765] *Tambu*, a proper name bestowed by an old man became *pukimani* on the latter's death, the ordinary word *tamu* (imperative form of verb 'to sit down') was not affected.

582 On account chiefly of the extreme form of polygyny practised by the
595 Tiwi whereby most of the girls and young women belong to a comparatively few old men, the father of a family is almost invariably much older than his wife. While a woman goes to live with her husband at about the age of 13, a man is lucky to get his first wife under the age of 35. It follows that in the great majority of cases the father of children dies
587 long before the mother. Therefore as a woman without a husband is unknown amongst the Tiwi, a woman passes through the possession of quite a number of different men during her lifetime and does not remain in an unmarried state for more than a day or two. A widow

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20



the advent of the buffalo-hunters, few white men had visited the islands since the early days of the naval settlement at Fort Dundas, established by Sir Gordon Bremer in 1824, but abandoned four years later. Malays and Japanese pearlers have been in the habit of taking in water from either of the islands and have frequently come into disastrous conflict with the natives. It is perhaps also on account of their isolation from civilization that I found the blacks comparatively free from any serious disease. Apart from the various minor ailments such as traumatic lesions and their after-effects, cataracts and keratitis, a few congenital deformities and such like, only a few cases of tertiary syphilis came under my notice.

A young gin was suffering from a disease of the hip, apparently chronic, but she was too timid to permit me to make an examination. They are on the whole a healthy, sturdy people of moderate stature, with a good muscular development and a square, big thorax. The characteristics are Australoid and yet they present certain insular peculiarities.

### *The Head.*

The forehead is low, with a marked supraorbital development; the face somewhat depressed and the lower jaw strong. The eyes are sunken and the nose is small. The wavy black hair of some of the males was worked up into numerous small, cylindrical, pendant masses with clay and ochre.[1] This, so far as I could ascertain, designated mourning. Others had besmeared their hair with ochre. The hairs on the upper lip are pulled out. The growth of the beard of the men varies, but is, on an average, good.

The natives of either island do not practise the knocking out of one or two incisors as they do on the mainland. Major Campbell,[2] however, reports having observed the custom on Melville Island.

The face is painted symmetrically with differently coloured ochres, charcoal, and pipeclay, in various degrees of complexity (Fig. 1). A few of the simpler designs might be described briefly:—*Case* (1): The whole surface of the face blackened with charcoal. *Case* (2): The nose red and the rest of the face charcoal-black. *Case* (3): Face (including the shaven upper lip and upper part of chin) charcoal-

[1] *Cf.* J. MacGillivray, *Narrative Voyage H.M.S. "Rattlesnake,"* London, 1852, vol. ii, p. 13: "The characteristic mode of dressing the hair among the Torres Strait Islanders is to have it twisted up into long pipe-like ringlets, and wigs in imitation of this are also worn"; and again, "at Cape York I have at times for a week together seen all the men and lads with the hair twisted into little strands well daubed over with red ochre and turtle fat."

Also P. P. King, *Survey of the Intertropical Coasts of Australia*, 1837, vol. i, p. 114: "The men were more muscular and better formed than any we have before seen, they were daubed over with a yellow pigment which was the colour of the neighbouring cliff (Luxmore Head on Melville Island); their hair was long and curly and appeared to be clotted with a whitish paint."

[2] *Journ. Geogr. Society*, London, 1834, vol. iv, p. 153. *Cf.* also H. Klaatsch: *Rep. Austr. Assoc. Adv. Science*, 1907, vol. xi, p. 501.

5: Basedow D-5 (1911)1913 OI20 Tiwi OI20



Notes on The

A record of something of the kind having existed on the mainland is contained in MacGillivray's narrative (1852). In referring to the burial-ceremonies of natives of the Cobourg Peninsula, this author[1] states that "when decomposition has gone on sufficiently far, the bones are carefully removed, painted red, wrapped up in bark, and carried about with the tribe for some time; after which they are finally deposited, either in a hollow tree or a shallow grave, over which a low mound of earth and stones is raised, occasionally ornamented with posts at the corners."

171 765

This same author refers to similar burial ceremonies which he observed of the "Kowraregas," natives inhabiting the Prince of Wales group of islands, situate near Cape York in Torres Strait. He writes[2] of a grave he saw at Port Lihou, some time after Bete Jukes' visit: "When the head of a family dies at Muralug, the body is laid out upon a framework[3] of sticks raised a foot from the ground and is there allowed to rot . . . until the head of the corpse becomes nearly detached by the process of putrefaction, when it is removed and handed over to the custody of the eldest wife. . . . The body, or rather the headless skeleton, is then interred in a shallow grave, over which a mound is raised, ornamented by wooden posts at the corners painted red, with sometimes shells or other decorations attached to them. . . ."

171 764

Perhaps it would not be out of place to make a passing reference to the native burial-place discovered by Captain Sturt[4] near Lake Buddah, off the Macquarie River, in New South Wales (latitude 32° 5′, longitude 148° 10′). "It consists of an oblong mound, with three semicircular seats. A walk encompassed the whole from which three others branched off, for a few yards only, into the forest. Several cypresses, overhanging the grave, were fancifully carved on the inner side, and on one the shape of a heart was deeply engraved." A similarity of method will be apparent. Instead of having separate carved posts surrounding the grave, the natives of Macquarie River carved the trees surrounding it. The walk encompassing the mound might be regarded as the equivalent of the cleared space characteristic of the island graves.

Mr. P. Foelsche and I have described painted and ornamented poles that are erected close to the graves of deceased members of the Larrekiya tribe in the Port Darwin district.[5]

During our geological explorations of the north-west coast of the Northern 764

R. Clement, *Publication of Royal Ethnological Museum at Leiden*, series ii, No. 6 (Catalogue by J. D. E. Schmeltz), vol. xvi, Plate V, Fig. 8; H. Basedow, *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxviii, 1904, pp. 22 and 28, Plate III, Fig. 4; H. Klaatsch, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1906, pp. 792, and 1907, p. 654.

[1] J. MacGillivray, *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. "Rattlesnake,"* 1852, vol. i, p. 149.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 32.

[3] *Vide* references given by me in *Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. xxxi, 1907, p. 6.

[4] *Vide* Charles Sturt: *Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia*, London, 1834, vol. i, p. 14, and frontispiece.

[5] *Vide Trans. Roy. Soc. S. Australia*, vol. v, 1882, p. 5, and *op. cit.*, vol. xxxi, 1907, p. 7.

7:Fry D-5 (1913) 1949 OI20 Tiwi OI20

**A Bathurst Island Mourning Rite.**

Sir:

121 Late in February, 1913, word came to Darwin that a fatal epidemic was prevalent in Bathurst and Melville Islands, and I was instructed to visit the islands and do anything possible to help.

122 I arrived at the Roman Catholic Mission Station at the southern end of Apsley Strait on Bathurst Island on March 2nd, and four days later, with the kindly assistance of Father Coudreau, set off up the Strait in a ten-foot sailing dinghy with a Malay, Matthew Gar, who had a smattering of the native language, two adult islanders, Mari and Dulin, a small native boy, Olinyarra, and stores. On the fourth day at Marinlampi, about two miles from Point Brace, at the northern end of the strait, a native camp was found. There were about thirty natives in the group, variously painted. 765 An old man, later found to be named Kerbo, was sitting chanting beside a small heap of red stones in the centre of a cleared circle about twelve feet in diameter. A pile of cooked yams was beside him and he was [177] scraping them with a mission-given knife. The time of my arrival was about ten in the morning. A small boy squatted beside the old man at times but otherwise the natives lounged about outside the circle indifferently coming and going. It appeared that a death ceremony was in progress. A woman sitting with her three boys under a pandanus palm nearby was pointed out as the mother of the dead man. When all the yams had been peeled the old man walked about in [599] the circle chanting and clacking two sticks together. There was an intermission until about 2 p.m., when the old man resumed his chanting. About 4 p.m. he returned again and proceeded to cut up the yams, placing

(p 79-A)

765 the pieces in a bark bag, with intervals of walking and chanting. The crowd had now invaded his circle and his walking was confined to a small sector of the circle. Once he washed his hands, head and beard with water and retired to eat. When he had finished, the small boy brought a bark bag of water, which he emptied into the bag containing the cut-up yams. After dark, about 7.30, the old man began to chant again [535] within the circle. He was joined by a number of men, and they shuffled around chanting, slapping their buttocks, and dragging one foot. Finally they shouted and then moved off in single file to a small water channel in the grass nearby. The grass was trodden down and the old man tipped the yams into the water, while the chorus beat their buttocks and cried "Broop." A shout was given and they then dispersed.

During the night the old man chanted at intervals. At sunrise he was seen standing beneath a palm rubbing himself with ochre, and the small boy attending him. He chanted and others joined him. They filed down to the creek, where a shout like "R-r-r-r-p" was given. The old man started to eat the yams and others followed. They then returned to the circle and cleared it by scraping outwards with their feet, tufts of grass and pieces of bark being thrown away. The stones from the central pile were placed round the edge of the circle. The old man took three small stones from the centre and threw them a few feet into the air, with the shout of "R-r-r-r-p." The ceremony was finished.

The language difficulty was formidable, but I learned that I had broken in on the third day of the ceremony. On the first day palm nuts (*kwawka*) had been gathered and eaten. On the second day yams had been collected and had been cooked at sunrise on the third day. I was told that

I was told that
765 the old man had chanted about the *Tarula*,[1]
533 who had planted magic on the beaches to
754 the north at the beginning of the wet season.
[648] The sun heated the magic, and up it went like smoke and the wind blew it all about. The magic works on the blackfellow with a feeling like a snake crawling up the legs. It moves up to his stomach, and when it reaches his heart he eats no more and dies. He also sang that he was an old man, his wind was short and soon he would die. Later he sang of a fight he had had with another tribe. Later he sang of people who came and fed him while he was sick. When standing in the water he was calling on the others to make the ceremony. When he threw up the stones he called *wei tua*, i.e " finish."

754 During the next four weeks I visited tribes in various parts of the islands and heard the same story. I was shown a sample of the magic. It was a tightly woven string bag about the size of a billiard ball and stuffed with kapok. This was said to have been " sung " before it was buried.

124 Statistics of the mortality of the epidemic
802 presented a problem. The only words for numbers which I could obtain with certainty

[1] The *tarula* were mainland blacks in the employ of local white men. They were called *tarula* (" lightning ") after the guns carried by their employers.

[p 80-A]